

The Wormery, by Stephen Cole and Paul Magrs

A Big Finish Productions Dr Who Audio Drama, released Nov 2003

[Part One]

(A cork is pulled from a bottle, and a drink poured. A Scots lady speaks.)

MICKEY: You know, there was once a place where the truth really could be found in the bottom of a glass. Will you partake, Mister Ashcroft? I usually do at this time of day. The sun, as they say, is over the yard arm. Och, do you know, it's very good of you to come and listen to an old dame's ramblings like this. What was I saying? Och, oh yes. Bianca's. Ah, the only place where that old adage had any truth in it. And the only place you could go to get a drink in those heady, wicked days. And, the more you drank, the clearer the truth became. All sorts of truths. Now Bianca's was where we worked the tables, all of us girls, and Bianca herself would sing each evening, bewitching her regulars and enticing new faces in from the streets. Flitting like shadows, Mister Ashcroft, they came from all over. You'd be surprised. That was in our hey-day. Oh, and how they could talk. Bianca's was a kind of bolt-hole for the persecuted, a speak-easy for radicals and revolutionaries and intellectuals, and the simply desperate. They came from everywhere to listen, and to talk, and I, of course, I heard every word. And not just at the tables. We had a room, you see. The Office, we called it. It was hidden out the back. And the whole of the club was, shall we say, well, it was bugged. Everything said at the tables was recorded as we listened in from the Office. Bianca loved to know what people were saying about her. But, er, I suspect it's those tapes, Mister Ashcroft, that you'd like me to share with you. The ones I pulled from the rubble and ruins that was all that was left of Bianca's at the end of the war. Just one case of tapes, three hundred yards of spoilt metallic tape on which the hidden tale of Bianca's cabaret still exists. Right, well, would you go to the drinks cabinet and get me out a fresh bottle of this stuff. And while you're there, just have a wee poke round behind the sherry glasses. I think you'll find the box there, Mister Ashcroft, with everything inside. Everything you're looking for. Och, but come on and have a drink. Just relax. It'll make everything all the more vivid.

(Tape starts playing piano music.)

MICKEY: So, I was called Mickey then. Mickey. I'd adopted one of those tomboyish names and had my hair bobbed short. Och, it had been the fashion for a while. I was the longest serving waitress at the club, and it wasn't everyone could keep up with the pace of life. And since I was so senior, so sassy and smart, shall we say, I was accorded certain professional privileges by the manager, the owner, Henry. Ah, here he is, behind the scenes, florid of complexion and grasping by nature, sat in his wee booth by the door, steely eyes glancing everywhere as his clientele drink themselves silly. Strictly teetotal, Henry. You have to keep a level head when you're in charge of a venue like this, eh Henry?

HENRY: What? What's that?

MICKEY: I said, you never drink.

HENRY: Filthy stuff.

MICKEY: Henry also organises the special taxis that drop off and pick up our guests here at Bianca's. It's the only way to get in and out of our secretive little den. You'd never find your way here without one of Henry's special cabs.

HENRY: We're a little out of the way. We're a little bit exclusive.

MICKEY: That we are, Henry.

HENRY: Who are you talking to, girl? You haven't been drinking, have you?

MICKEY: Huh, of course I've been drinking, sweetheart. Everyone must drink. That's the only way at Bianca's.

HENRY: Don't enjoy yourself too much. I don't pay you to have fun.

MICKEY: He's got his fingers in so many pies, has Henry. But, you know, he's powerful and useful, and someone I needed to keep sweet if I wanted to make anything of myself. If I wanted someday to be like Bianca. Och, but here she comes, the star of the show. It's about this time of night, each and every night, that she makes an appearance on the small stage here in the cabaret named for her. She slinks out before our small, select audience and she soothes away our troubles with her songs. Oh, she croons, she seduces, and she keeps them coming back and demanding more. Heinrich accompanies her on the piano. She had a full band once, but Bianca doesn't like sharing the limelight. Heinrich knows his place. He just tickles the ivories and the odd bad Noel Coward impersonation.

BIANCA: My friends, I adore you all. You give my existence meaning. You lift the woes from my shoulders. I am nothing without you all.

MICKEY: At the end of each short appearance, she is wrung dry by the emotion of it all.

BIANCA: I am nothing but a husk.

MICKEY: She savours every stroke of applause, she catches every breathless starry-eyed comment. We used to joke she's slip a hidden mike on every one who came in if she had the chance.

BIANCA: My dear, I leave nothing to chance.

MICKEY: Oh, but she would look fragile, delectable. A single pale lily, funereal, exotic, exuding a heavy, only slightly decadent scent. They had to help her off the stage to take a table at the back, in the shadows. And there she sits, like a queen, sipping tequila as the clientele pay court to her one by one. They shuffle up, mutter a few words, and back away again. Bianca takes their compliments with good grace, and watches them through drowsy eyelids.

BIANCA: Light my ciggie for me, would you, darling?

DOCTOR: Eh? Oh, er, well, if you like. May I say how much I enjoyed your show tonight?

BIANCA: I've never seen you here before at my club.

DOCTOR: Well, that's because it's the first time I've found myself at your door. I thought I'd have a little look-in.

BIANCA: That's not a cigarette lighter.

DOCTOR: Hmm? No. But I don't smoke. But it's lighting it up, look, most brightly.

BIANCA: Very droll.

DOCTOR: You're aware of the attendant health risks?

BIANCA: I'm in excellent health, I assure you. Your torch gadget, it looks like some very futuristic kind of device.

DOCTOR: Well, that rather depends where your future is, doesn't it? To some, this little device might appear antiquated.

BIANCA: You are a deep man, a thinker.

DOCTOR: Thinker? Yes, I should hope so.

BIANCA: Like my good friends all around my little club, like your gadget, very bright.

DOCTOR: And very drunk. In fact, everybody here seems to be quite sozzled.

BIANCA: It must be something in the drink. Are you averse to a good strong liquor, Doctor?

DOCTOR: You know who I am?

BIANCA: I am Bianca. I am very knowledgeable. Wearily so. You are quite correct about people coming here to drink and drink like mad. Sometimes it seems like the only way to block out the whole of this crazy world.

DOCTOR: Yes. Well, I've certainly felt like that at times.

BIANCA: Have you, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Mmm. What I usually do is plunge myself headlong into a really good, brand new adventure. That takes you out of yourself. Especially one with lots of fighting and shouting.

BIANCA: You're aware of the attendant health risks?

DOCTOR: Hmm. Touché.

BIANCA: You do not look like the kind of adventurer who recklessly endangers himself simply for the thrill of it.

DOCTOR: Don't I? And what do they look like?

BIANCA: Like her, over there by the door.

DOCTOR: Oh no. Not her again.

MICKEY: On that particular evening, the mysterious Doctor wasn't the only strange face. Now, a woman came in, rather unsteadily, with a whole lot of soldiers. Roughnecks in uniform we pay to patrol the streets outside. They actually caused more bother than they prevented. Anyway, these ruffians had disturbed the woman in the alley as she was asking for admittance to our club. She was careworn, bedraggled, a floor-length leopard skin coat draped over her shoulders, and still a wee patina of glamour under her crazed and damaged complexion.

(A slightly drunk Lancashire lass.)

IRIS: Oh, thank you very much, boys. Oh, but I don't think I'll be requiring any further assistance.

HENRY: Is there a problem here?

STURMER: (German) We found this woman hanging around outside. You don't want that. She'll give the place a bad name.

HENRY: Thank you for your concern, Corporal Sturmer.

IRIS: A bad name? Oh, how dare you.

HENRY: Corporal Sturmer, perhaps you and your men would like to retire to one of our exclusive booths. Mickey?

STURMER: That would be very satisfactory.

MICKEY: Yes, Henry?

HENRY: Fetch Corporal Sturmer and his men some of the House Special. I assume that's what they've come for.

STURMER: Yes, the House Special. Of course. And also Miss Bianca's divine voice.

HENRY: She'll be back on stage at about midnight.

STURMER: Very good.

MICKEY: Come this way, gentlemen.

HENRY: And I shall deal with this lady, Ms

IRIS: Wildthyme. Ms Iris Wildthyme. Transtemporal adventuress extraordinaire, at your service.

HENRY: Transtemporal.

IRIS: Whoops. There I go again, opening me mouth and blabbing away and showing off. But yes, it's true. I am indeed a traveller from beyond all known Time and Space, and it's supposed to be a big secret. Bit like this place. I've come here to your little bar on a very important mission.

HENRY: Hmm. How fascinating. Perhaps you'd like to order a drink?

IRIS: Ooo! Ooo eck. These stools are a bit high, lovey. I don't feel very dainty perching meself up here.

HENRY: House Special?

IRIS: Let me see the label.

HENRY: There isn't one.

IRIS: Oh, thank goodness for that. I thought I was drunker than I thought. What is it? (sniffs) Oh, you know, it smells like (sniff) tequila.

HENRY: Then that is what it is.

IRIS: Oh, just leave the bottle, chuck. Do you know, I've been wandering them rainy lonely streets all night looking for a place just like this. The kind of place where you can ease away all your worldly cares with music and song.

HENRY: I'm glad you found us, of course, but tell me. Our guests usually arrive and leave via specially arranged taxis. We like to keep Bianca's exclusive. And we have already got one stranger here tonight.

IRIS: Ooo, I wonder if I know him? Oh, I know all sorts of people, you know. I get about.

HENRY: Hmm. Well, you'll get a chance to find out. He's heading over this way.

IRIS: Ooo. Oh, help. Oh, ecky thump, do I look all right, Henry? Oh, I got soaked out there. Oh, and then I was man-handled so brutally. Oh heck, is me lipstick straight? Do I look awful?

DOCTOR: Iris Wildthyme, I want a word with you.

IRIS: Well, excuse me! I don't call that very nice manners, just barging over and grabbing a lady like that. Ooo, unhand me, sir.

DOCTOR: What on Earth are you doing here?

IRIS: 1930s Berlin happens to be one of my favourite spots.

DOCTOR: You're drunk.

IRIS: Of course I'm drunk. I'm always drunk.

DOCTOR: Iris, it's me, the Doctor.

IRIS: I know it's you, you daft ha'porth.

DOCTOR: Oh. Well, usually you seem rather more pleased to see me.

IRIS: Do I?

DOCTOR: And usually I get something close to a bear hug at this point, and then you dog my footsteps for days on end and generally make my life a misery for a while, before trundling off again in that death-trap of a double-decker bus.

IRIS: Is that a fact? Well, maybe I've decided to play it cool for once.

DOCTOR: Oh, that's all right, then. That's better than you making your usual embarrassing display.

IRIS: Anyway, I don't fancy you much in this incarnation.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry?

IRIS: All the others I do, you see. All the others, oh, I'd be off like a shot. Never mind, chuck, better luck next time. Oh, and have a drink.

DOCTOR: Iris, I couldn't care less whether you, oh, fancy me, as you put it, or not. I've been trying to get you off my back for years. What is that muck you're drinking? And haven't you had enough?

IRIS: Oh, not yet. No, I can't hear the voices yet.

DOCTOR: You're acting very strangely, Iris.

IRIS: Perhaps I am.

IRIS [OC]: (very slow) That's because

MICKEY: Oh dear. Many of the tapes are damaged. They're frittered and spent, and burned and stretched. Och, it's such a pity. Look, move on to another, Mister Ashcroft. You spool it into the machine, and let me pour you a little more. And a wee splash for me too. Oh look, try not to get the tapes with the scientists talking. They were so boring. I hardly understood a word they said. But you know, as a good hostess, I had to sit with them and listen to them. Dullest conversations. Ah, here. What about this? Bianca.

BIANCA: Yes. Yes, my dear. Of course. No, I understand.

MICKEY: Does she sound like she's talking to herself? Well maybe, from the outside, that's exactly how she seems, towards the end of the evening, before her final number, nursing her glass of cloudy amber poison, the bottle set out before her. No companion. All had paid their tribute to the great lady and she was seated alone.

BIANCA: You won't have to wait long. My darlings, patience.

MICKEY: Perhaps she sounds mad? A crazy chanteuse mumbling into her glass. Or maybe she's haunted? What do you think, Mister Ashcroft? Ah, but you're very quiet also. You are discreet. Ah, you see, your secrecy, your polite silence as I ramble on, as we listen to some old dame ramble on into her tequila, preserved through these many years, many decades ago now.

BIANCA: I want the same things as you. Harmony? Well, we all want harmony.

MICKEY: The audio medium, it can be so deceptive.

DOCTOR: Iris, you're rambling.

IRIS: Am I?

DOCTOR: You're making no sense.

MICKEY: Ah! Great. You found the other half of that snapped tape. Well done, Mister Ashcroft. Do you know, there are beings that exist just like worms who, if you chop them in half like this tape, they grow another head, each half. They set off in separate lives. They regenerate themselves beyond damage. Almost immortal, slippery, hard to pin down. Now, both the Doctor and Iris Wildthyme were of this breed of super-person. We didn't know at the time what esteemed company we had at Bianca's that evening.

IRIS: I'm telling you, a mission. I'm on a mission.

DOCTOR: The usual mission, then? Treat all of Space-Time like one great big package holiday?

IRIS: Oh, that's a bit hurtful, luvvie. At least they didn't put me on trial.

DOCTOR: What!

IRIS: Oh, I heard all about it.

DOCTOR: Stop it.

IRIS: Oh, they put you in the dock and they made you accountable for all your meddling.

DOCTOR: It was a fix, it was a swiz.

IRIS: Oh no, that's not what I've heard, chuck. And I hear that the Time Lords are still after you.

DOCTOR: Well, at least they've heard of me. There's no record of your existence anywhere on Gallifrey. You claim to come from there, and no one, including me, has any memory of you at all.

IRIS: I erased meself.

DOCTOR: You what?

IRIS: You heard. Evidence of the past can be tampered with, you know, Doctor.

MICKEY: Indeed it can. Och, very true. Iris understood, you see, Mister Ashcroft. She knew that all that remains of us in history is the recorded evidence we leave behind us. These tapes are all we have to prove that Bianca's ever really existed. And that's why you want them, isn't it, Mister Ashcroft?

DOCTOR: Iris, you're in no fit state to discuss epistemological quandaries.

IRIS: Oh, really? Easy for you to say

HENRY: Is there a problem here?

IRIS: Yes. Yes, there is. My friend reckons I'm having a pisticam, pisticamol. That I've got a bit of a quandary. But you know what? I feel fine.

(Thud, glass breaks.)

MICKEY: That, Mister Ashcroft, was the sound of our eminent transtemporal adventuress crashing off her stool, along the bar, into the empties and on to the sticky floor. She was out cold.

DOCTOR: Here we go again.

HENRY: Could you er give me a hand, please?

DOCTOR: Where are we taking her?

HENRY: Well, we can't leave her here.

IRIS: I tell you, Doctor, this isn't just an ordinary nightclub. Oh, it's more than that.

DOCTOR: Oh yes? And I suppose all the booze gives you heightened sensory perception.

IRIS: As it happens, it does. I can see. I can. And they're talking. Hello? Hello?

HENRY: Help me into the Office with her. I can't let the other clientele see her like this. Ah, Mickey. The esteemed Ms Wildthyme has met with an unfortunate accident.

MICKEY: Yes, I saw her drop off her stool. Do you want me to sober her up?

HENRY: We'll lay her on the chaise longue in the Office.

MICKEY: Right you are.

MICKEY: Och, don't I sound young in these tapes, Mister Ashcroft? Oh dear. Well, I was. I was just a slip of a girl living away from Glasgow in a Berlin bed-sit with an America student. But d'you know, I saw some things back there in the '30s, back there at Bianca's, that would make your hair stand on end. All that kerfuffle you can hear is us lying Iris down in the Office.

DOCTOR: She's coming to. Oh! She's lying on my coat tails! Help me out.

IRIS: Oh. Oh Doctor, luvvie. Ooo, I can see what your game is.

DOCTOR: No!

IRIS: Got me on the couch, have you, you mucky old devil. Just because I said I wasn't interested. Ooo. (laughs)

DOCTOR: All right, all right. Will someone get her off me?

MICKEY: Uh oh, she's passed out again.

DOCTOR: I'd like to say she isn't usually like this, but she is.

HENRY: We get all sorts at Bianca's.

(Iris snores.)

DOCTOR: Yes, well, I'd like to have another little talk with Bianca, if I may.

HENRY: She's about to go on for her final number.

DOCTOR: Well, I won't take up much of her time.

HENRY: Very well.

IRIS: Don't listen to a word she says, Doctor. Don't believe that Bianca woman. Don't you believe what she tells you.

DOCTOR: Oh dear. Let her sleep it off.

HENRY: Watch over her, Mickey. And you'd better fetch her a bucket. Er, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Hmm?

HENRY: Before you go? Outside, please.

HENRY: How did you come here, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Carried upon the colourful size tens you see before you.

HENRY: Don't take me for a fool. There's a blue box downstairs by the toilets. You were seen discreetly leaving said box.

DOCTOR: Was I really? I noticed no one. But then it's so shadowy down there I could barely see in front of my face.

MICKEY: He's right about the shadows, Mister Ashcroft. They were everywhere in our little nightspot. The brighter the spotlights on stage, the thicker the shadows scared away into the club's corners. And Bianca herself was so bright, bright as the star she was. We watched the goings-on on stage, entranced, never really noticing the warm smoky, fuggy shadows that enveloped us all, or what was shifting and stirring within them.

HENRY: I'm in charge of security here, Doctor. It's my job to notice everything. Case in point. You were further observed slipping out the back way and then letting yourself in through the front door like a casual punter.

DOCTOR: I came here seeking a diversion. I was hoping to avoid a dramatic entrance.

HENRY: In a costume like that?

DOCTOR: Worn precisely to irritate the likes of you. Would you care to come to the point?

HENRY: The box. How did you get it inside?

DOCTOR: You'd need to drink a lot of your House Special before you'd believe the answer to that one.

HENRY: You're a secretive man. Well, I respect that. Bianca's depends on people's discretion.

DOCTOR: Well, if you'll excuse me, I'll just make a discreet exit.

HENRY: I'll have the secrets of your box, Doctor. I've a feeling they could be most illuminating.

MICKEY: D'you hear that, Mister Ashcroft? Do you hear words muttered at the Doctor's retreating back, out of earshot? Oh, d'you know, I must confess it's strange for me hearing all this again, so long after the event. Catching the little comments that passed me by, and the scenes I only glimpsed from the corner of my sparking eye as I racked up the drinks for my boys. You're a dab hand at seeing what goes where yourself, aren't you, Mister Ashcroft, splicing those bits of tape together like you're fixing things all the time. You're an experienced man. I knew that the second I clapped eyes on you. Ooo, oh, that's me, poking around for a bucket for Iris. I remember watching over the old dear as she slept, snoring like an elephant. There was a funny sort of, sort of vibration. An echo of some kind. But no, it wasn't just Iris's snoring. I listened and listened, and I got a wee bit spooked, I suppose, so I decided to listen in properly on one of the conversations outside. I crossed over to the recording equipment at the back of the Office and turned up the loudspeaker.

(Based on Kenneth Williams and Hugh Paddick.)

ALLIS: Physical construct can't exist in more than one dimension at a time. The stresses on the interstitial fabrics would rip it all to hell.

BALLIS: The whole thing's utter rot, of course, in any case.

ALLIS: That's what I said, Ballis. You can't just fold up space like an envelope.

BALLIS: I recall you said as much to Einstein.

ALLIS: And he stared at me like I was the one with the daft face fuzz.

MICKEY: I see your eyes have lit up, Mister Ashcroft. Mmm hmm. That's Allis and Ballis, God rest them. A funny wee couple. Thought I couldn't see them holding hands under the table. Och, do you know, I thought it was sweet they thought I could be so narrow-minded, working at Bianca's. Perhaps you understand what they're talking about. I never could. But I realised that was the sound I'd heard before. It was just a little louder. It was there even in the occasional pause in their conversations, when they'd just look at each other, fingers fumbling, intertwining furtively in the shadows. Whispers. I thought it was just a fault in the equipment or something, you know. The quality wasn't all that good, after all, or else it was ghosts. Bianca always said we'd make enough noise to raise the dead some day. Yes, ghosts watching us all and listening discreetly, gossiping quietly in the smoke and shadows.

BIANCA: What are you listening to, Mickey?

MICKEY: Oh. Oh, er, nothing, er Bianca. Nothing. I er

BIANCA: What's this, a visitor?

MICKEY: Oh, she's just sleeping it off. She made a bit of a scene outside and Henry said

BIANCA: Oh, that Henry. I might have known. He's getting worse and worse, letting lushes lower the tone of our private rooms. Get her out.

MICKEY: But, but Henry said

BIANCA: Out! And take her grotty old bag. Wait a minute.

MICKEY: What is it?

BIANCA: Bottles. Of the House Special!

MICKEY: No!

BIANCA: She must have stolen them from the cellar. Hey! Hey you, sleepy head. Steal from me, would you?

IRIS: Steal? Are you implying I'm some sort of common criminal?

BIANCA: Oh, that's precisely what you are.

IRIS: Here, get off me. That booze is mine. I need it.

BIANCA: Out! Now. Mickey, help me.

MICKEY: I think you'd better go, Iris.

IRIS: No, no, I ref... hey, let go of me. I can stand up by meself, thanks very much. Thank you!
(Totter, thud.)

BIANCA: My nerves really can't take this.

DOCTOR: Ah, Bianca. I've been looking for you. What on Earth?

IRIS: Doctor, help me. They've turned on me. I know too much. Oh!

DOCTOR: Easy, Iris. Mickey, I thought she was sleeping it off.

BIANCA: This is not a doss house.

DOCTOR: No, but then just exactly what is it?

BIANCA: I'm sure I don't follow you, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Iris was right. For once. I came here for entertainment, diversion, solace perhaps.

BIANCA: A few hours of harmony in this crazy world.

DOCTOR: Just like the rest of your colourful clientele, yes. But this whole place feels wrong.

BIANCA: I really don't know

DOCTOR: This is no ordinary club, is it?

BIANCA: Certainly not. This is Bianca's.

HENRY: Perhaps you should leave, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Henry, my dear chap, you do turn up with a dreary predictability.

IRIS: No, no, no, he's right. We should leave. Then you'll see. Then you'll see what's what and what's not, and what-not.

DOCTOR: Well, I think Iris has had enough. And I've had quite enough myself for one night.

HENRY: Mickey.

MICKEY: Yes?

HENRY: Show our guests the way out to the taxi rank.

MICKEY: Yes, Henry.

DOCTOR: Iris, where's your bus? I'll take you there.

IRIS: Oh, you rogue, what are you planning?

DOCTOR: To leave you to sleep off your bender out of everyone's way. (sotto) And then perhaps a small investigation.

BIANCA: Farewell, Doctor. And you too, Iris. We'll be seeing each other again.

HENRY: Adieu.

MICKEY: This way, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Come on, Iris, work with me. Work with me.
IRIS: Oh, you can't hear the voices?
DOCTOR: We're in a crowded club. Of course there are voices.
MICKEY: Doctor, Doctor, you'll need a token for the taxi fare.
DOCTOR: No need. Good night.
MICKEY: But
STURMER: So, the inebriate has found herself an escort, hmm?
DOCTOR: Would you mind getting out of my way? I've really had a most trying evening.
STURMER: She drinks to forget, perhaps.
DOCTOR: Perhaps she does. Now again, would you please?
STURMER: Perhaps my men should escort her home? They could use some amusement.
DOCTOR: We can find our own way, thank you.
HENRY: Corporal Sturmer.
STURMER: Henry.
HENRY: It's not yet time for your men to leave. Still so much entertainment to be had.
DOCTOR: Goodnight, gentlemen.
IRIS: Oh, that Henry. He's always poking his nose in, isn't he?
DOCTOR: Yes, well, I'm grateful.
HENRY: Don't thank me yet, Doctor.
MICKEY: Henry, your phone's ringing.
HENRY: Don't pick it up, I'll get it. Henry.
WORMS [OC]: Are you true to us, my darling? Tell me, I implore you, do.
HENRY: You know I am.
WORMS [OC]: Tell me you're true now, my darling. You carry our dreams with you.
HENRY: I'm learning more all the time about what we need to
WORMS [OC]: To make our dreams come true, yes. Yes. You must not upset Sturmer and his men.
HENRY: They're thugs.
WORMS [OC]: We love them, and all the little things they do. And the Doctor. We love the Doctor. He has knowledge we need.
HENRY: Him? (laughs) He's just a vagabond. Nowhere to go and no one to go there with him.
WORMS [OC]: And she?
HENRY: The old woman is dangerous. She's been in communion with them.
WORMS [OC]: She has fire in her heart. She will be used. Chooosed. We shall use her too.

DOCTOR: Taxi! Taxi! Iris, where's your bus?
IRIS: We can't get to it.
DOCTOR: We must. My Tardis is out of bounds for now, and I need to think.
IRIS: You need a drink. Stop thinking and start drinking.
DOCTOR: Taxi! Ah.
DRIVER: Token, please.
DOCTOR: Oh, I er, I don't have one. Iris, please, the bus.
IRIS: Oh, it's around here somewhere.
DRIVER: I need your token.
DOCTOR: I've got some money here. Just drive in the direction of the Berchtesgaden.
DRIVER: That's not on my rounds.
IRIS: Fog's coming in.
DOCTOR: Hmm? What's the German for pea-souper? Oh, quite uncanny. Driver, perhaps you should slow down a little?
DRIVER: Reference?
DOCTOR: What?
DRIVER: If you've not got a token, I need a location reference.
DOCTOR: Is everyone mad round here? Look, please, slow down. You can't see a thing through that ah!
IRIS: Oh, me head. These taxis, no interdimensional shielding. Oh, hang on, I've got a boiled sweet in me bag somewhere. Oh look.
DOCTOR: Bianca's.
IRIS: It's quite beautiful by starlight. You get me drift now, don't you, luvvie? There are many ways to reach Bianca's.
DRIVER: But only one way out. Yeah, yeah. Location reference. What planet d'you want?
DOCTOR: The entrance is in Berlin, but the club itself is in deep space!

[Part Two]

IRIS: One entrance is in Berlin, and there's another on Astridia, and on Garganon, and it

DOCTOR: Yes, yes, all right. I get the general impression.

MICKEY: D'you see? He worked it out, Mister Ashcroft, but I never could. Oh, of course, flitting between planets was what he did. It was second nature. And, er, you don't raise an eyebrow yourself, I notice. Well, I was from Glasgow, staying in Berlin for the summer, and as far as I was concerned, and for Sturmer and his thugs too, that's where Bianca's resided. Henry gave us each a token for the taxi and we'd get back home in a blur. Of course the club was in Berlin. How could we dream the truth? I mean, anyone who dropped in could tell there was a touch of magic about Bianca's but we, none of us, knew just what a conjuring trick was being performed. Well, except Bianca herself, of course, and Henry knew about it right enough, but, but he didn't quite understand it.

HENRY: But I have to. I must.

MICKEY: The next night, the Doctor and that Iris Wildthyme came back to Bianca's.

DOCTOR: It's outrageous! Thoroughly outrageous!

MICKEY: He'd been walking round doing nothing all day.

DOCTOR: The cheek of it! Dropping us in the void, stranding us outside till opening time!

MICKEY: He didn't have a token for the driver.

DOCTOR: A most ignorant and unhelpful fellow! What really annoys me is that I should have realised what was going on sooner.

IRIS: Oh, I dare say you were distracted. You know, seeing me again.

DOCTOR: You know more about this than you're saying, Iris.

IRIS: Opening time! Oh, praise the Lord. I'm gasping.

DOCTOR: Yes, yes, yes. Before we go inside, I'd like to propose

IRIS: Ooo!

DOCTOR: A small plan of campaign.

IRIS: Must you? Oh well, when you've met as many camp pains as I have.

MICKEY: The Doctor and Iris plonked themselves on one of the creaking leather sofas at the back of the smoky hall. Bianca made a bee-line over.

BIANCA: Why, Doctor, and your friend, welcome back.

DOCTOR: We found it difficult to tear ourselves away.

BIANCA: Iris, I'm glad to see you a little more dignified.

IRIS: Oh, the night's still young, luvvie. Remember young, do you?

BIANCA: (laughs) Really, my dear Doctor, where did you find her?

DOCTOR: All through my lives in all the wrong places.

BIANCA: Well, would you care for a glass of my House Special, or have you already helped yourself?

IRIS: Listen, you. Those bottles of grog weren't from your supply. Oh no, they were mine all right.

BIANCA: Preposterous, my dear. That's my liquor. I'm sole agent.

IRIS: Ah, perhaps that's what *they* want you to think. Well, I'm just off to powder me nose, Doctor, as we discussed.

DOCTOR: Happy powdering. Now, tell me, Miss Bianca, your club.

BIANCA: My life's work.

DOCTOR: Oh, it's a remarkable feat, I'll grant you, anchoring a solid structure on a nexus point of the dimensions, but, a cabaret?

BIANCA: A voice like mine should reach the largest possible audience.

DOCTOR: My point exactly. This little venue hardly affords you the big crowds.

BIANCA: And yet, when completed, its doors will open to every corner of the universe.

DOCTOR: Wormholes.

BIANCA: What makes you say

DOCTOR: Wormholes, connecting the entrance of your club to embarkation points throughout Time and Space.

BIANCA: Most ingenious, is it not.

DOCTOR: Most dangerous. Nexus points are notoriously unstable at the best of times.

BIANCA: It's been very slow work, very gradual. It must be right. After all, that's why I've started small, opened my doors only to the proper people. People who can help. Allis and Ballis over there, for instance.

DOCTOR: Vertigo Ballis? From Astridia? He wrote the book on interstitial anomalies in eleven dimension

structures. And André Allis rewrote it. Wait a minute. One of their multi-dimension collaborations collapsed an entire star system. They're wanted men, surely?

BIANCA: We have so many here, meeting in private, forgetting their cares. Bianca's is a bolt-hole for the brilliant, the dazzlingly criminally wonderful. You're also very welcome here, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Am I? Oh, am I, indeed. Really.

BIANCA: And one day soon our doors will open everywhere at once, and I shall give my greatest, most irresistible performance. But my dear, I must lie down. I am worn quite skinny by your questions.

DOCTOR: Forgive me.

BIANCA: Oh Doctor, all crimes are forgiven at Bianca's. I'll see you later.

IRIS: Typical man. Plan of campaign indeed. While he lords it with Madam Vinegar-knickers upstairs I get to traipse about looking for his grotty old Tardis. Oh, we need proper equipment, we need accurate measurements. Why is it so dark down here anyway?

HENRY [OC]: Mickey, I've just found the door to the cloakrooms left ajar. You know the dangers.

IRIS: Dangers?

MICKEY [OC]: Have the bogs flooded again?

IRIS: Not surprised. How's anyone supposed to see where they're going with no lights on.

HENRY [OC]: They're out of bounds to the rank and file.

(Door slammed and locked.)

IRIS: Wonderful. Oh well, fetch his Nibs' toolkit. He's bound to have something in there to pick this lock.

Who's there?

WORMS: You will open the door.

IRIS: Eh?

WORMS: Bring us release, set free like birds, our heartache will cease.

IRIS: Pardon?

WORMS: Why have you come?

IRIS: Who wants to know? Doh! I'm not fannying around here with invisible men all day.

WORMS: You will help us become. Help us become. Help us. Help us.

IRIS: No, I ain't being ganged up on. Get off me! Pack it up!

MICKEY: Who's there? Who's there? Iris, is it you?

IRIS: Oh, Mickey, help me. I, I

MICKEY: I knew I'd heard voices. It's out of bounds down here.

IRIS: But I were, oh heck.

MICKEY: You've had a funny turn.

IRIS: I have not. I had nowhere to turn. There was a presence, sort of like, you know, like smothering me.

MICKEY: There's nothing here but shadows and leaky loos.

IRIS: Oh, leaky loos my foot. See? Bone dry. Not a puddle. So why is it out of bounds down here, eh?

MICKEY: Look, if Henry catches us down here he'll go spare. Let's go.

IRIS: But I've got to find the Doctor's

MICKEY: Come on, Iris, now.

IRIS: Oh. Oh, all right. It's about time I called in, anyway.

(Phone rings.)

HENRY: Hello? This is Henry.

WORMS [OC]: Iris.

HENRY: That woman.

WORMS [OC]: She came to us.

HENRY: She got downstairs?

WORMS [OC]: We felt her, touched her.

HENRY: You're growing stronger, then.

WORMS [OC]: Like love, we blossom between two tender souls. She will help us become.

HENRY: So it is her, from the other side.

WORMS [OC]: It must be soon. Time drives by so slowly when you've no place to go.

HENRY: I know. Be patient just a while longer. Just a short while longer.

IRIS: Make way. Come on, make way.

DOCTOR: Iris, what happened?

IRIS: I'm not quite sure.

DOCTOR: Well, did you find the gauges in the Tardis?

IRIS: I couldn't even find the Tardis. There's something else down there too.

DOCTOR: Oh, I should have gone myself.

IRIS: Yes, you should have, sending me off down there to face heaven knows what.

DOCTOR: To face the ladies' lavatories. How could I go poking about down there? Henry would know what I

was after in a trice.

MICKEY: Here, Iris, a nip of this'll help.

IRIS: The House Special? A nip? Way-hey! Give us a gob full.

DOCTOR: Easy. Iris!

IRIS: Oh, I needed it.

DOCTOR: You'll show yourself up again.

IRIS: I tell you, I need it.

DOCTOR: Well, if you need me, I'll be with Ballis and Allis, indulging in a conversation a trifle less predictable than this one.

ALLIS: That jumped-up little bore? Couldn't tell a gluon from a w-boson even with a quantum eviscerator.

BALLIS: Excuse me, you're the eviscerator round here, dearie.

DOCTOR: Greetings, gentlemen.

ALLIS: Oh, hello.

DOCTOR: Vertigo Ballis, André Allis. How very interesting to meet you. I've heard so much

BALLIS: Oh God, you're not the police?

DOCTOR: Certainly not. Arresting, certainly, but no. I'm the Doctor.

BALLIS: A quack?

ALLIS: What sort of a quack?

DOCTOR: A tired one in search of a little company and intelligent conversation.

BALLIS: Well, do join us.

DOCTOR: Thank you. A good evening, gentlemen?

BALLIS: As ever. Every night's the same at Bianca's, never the same.

(Both laugh.)

DOCTOR: Rather like being in a Tardis. No two days the same, unless you contravene the Laws of Time and live one twice over.

BALLIS: A Tardis?

DOCTOR: Yes, my craft. Tardis. Time and Relative Dimension

ALLIS: We know. Oh, goodness.

BALLIS: You're right, Doctor. Being in Bianca's is very like being in a Tardis.

DOCTOR: Hmm?

ALLIS: Because Bianca's *is* a Tardis.

DOCTOR: What?

BALLIS: Or what's left of one.

DOCTOR: But that's... I could have caused a Time Ram!

BALLIS: Time Ram?

(Both laugh.)

DOCTOR: Time Ram. Two Tardises cannot occupy the same Space-Time coordinates at the same time. Should it happen, then Time Ram occurs, with some pretty devastating results for the ship that was there first.

ALLIS: Well, like we said, there's been some modifications. Shielding installed, you know. Strictly speaking, Bianca's doesn't occupy any coordinates in Space-Time.

BALLIS: And yet it occupies them all.

DOCTOR: The power of the nexus point.

BALLIS: Indeed. There's a link between the craft and its local cosmos. A chronopathic equilibrium is generated through an extra-dimensional conduit.

ALLIS: See?

DOCTOR: All too clearly. Well, I think I'd better have another word with the owner. Where's she gone?

BALLIS: I saw her slip into Henry's office for one of their chatettes. Why not wait at the table in the far corner? She likes to compose herself there before a performance.

DOCTOR: Does she indeed. Then there shall I wait.

BIANCA: Henry, have you been monitoring the temporal bleeding around the conduits in the nexal portal?

HENRY: Don't vex yourself, Bianca. I've fixed all that.

BIANCA: Another of your ingenious little fiddles? You're becoming quite the expert.

HENRY: I want your coverage to be complete on our big opening night.

BIANCA: Our opening night, Henry?

HENRY: Yours, of course.

BIANCA: I'm grateful for your help with the harnessing of the nexus energies, naturally, Henry darling. Your unbidden tinkering with the machineries has improved their capabilities a good deal. You've impressed me, truly you have, but surely you wouldn't ever dream of forgetting whose show this really is, would you, dear? I see that you would not. Good boy. Run along now.

HENRY: (sotto) You'll see whose show this is come opening night, Bianca. And you'll see just what's opened.

MICKEY: This is an important bit, Mister Ashcroft. Iris had shut up her muttering at last, and her eyes snapped open like she'd, she'd dozed off in a tram and was worried she'd missed her stop. Then she got up, a little unsteadily, and I took the opportunity to see where she was heading.

IRIS: Backstage. Oh, it's a bit dark and cluttered round here. Oh, I can feel air on me neck.

MICKEY: The public aren't allowed round here.

IRIS: Oh, it's you, Mickey love. I was getting meself all tangled up in these curtains.

MICKEY: Do you want me to show you back to your seat?

IRIS: In a minute, in a minute, luvvie. I'm just. Ah. Ah ha! Here we are.

MICKEY: Hang on, you can't go in there. It's

IRIS: It's strictly out of bounds, yes, yes. Most interesting places are, chuck. Now, you be a good girl and don't get in me way. Oh, goodness, it's like Aladdin's cave in here.

MICKEY: Look, it's Bianca's private dressing room and no one is allowed to set a foot in here.

IRIS: What's she hiding, eh? Look at these bottles and everything. All these powders and paints.

MICKEY: I think you should leave right now.

IRIS: Oh, and just look at these frocks. Ooo, feathers, sequins. Hang on. Look at this. Oh, d'you know, I used to have a little number exactly like this. I was hoping one day to get back into it.

MICKEY: I'm warning you.

IRIS: Hang on. This *is* mine. I'd recognise these stains anywhere. That's brandy. Oh, and the ciggie burn on the left cuff. Hang on. Now what's Bianca doing with one of my old hand-me-downs, eh? Oh ho, that's what I'd like to know.

MICKEY: Iris.

IRIS: Shh, shh, shh, shh, shush. I'm listening.

MICKEY: What on Earth for?

IRIS: Little tiny voices. Little tiny suggestive voices whispering to me, calling out to me.

MICKEY: You're blind drunk and you're making a terrible mess.

IRIS: Oh, don't pull on me elbow, luvvie, or I'll have to fetch you a nasty smack. Now listen, and listen hard.

MICKEY: Oh, all right, but... Hang on, there is something. You're right. It's different from the whispering I heard before, though.

IRIS: And they're coming from over here.

MICKEY: What is it? What have you got?

IRIS: Bianca's powder compact. Mother of pearl, very nice. But listen to it.

MICKEY: I don't believe this. There's something inside.

IRIS: What did I tell you, eh? I've got a nose for these kind of nefarious goings-on, even when I am three sheets to the wind. Now, hang on. Now just keep very quiet and still.

MICKEY: What are you doing?

IRIS: I'm opening it, very gently

MICKEY: But. Urgh, that's horrible.

IRIS: Don't. You'll hurt his feelings.

MICKEY: Oh, it's some kind of urgh, slug or a maggot. In her compact? The manky besom.

IRIS: It's a worm.

MICKEY: A worm?

IRIS: Ooo, he's trying to tell us something.

BIANCA: Well, well, Doctor, waiting for me?

DOCTOR: I couldn't stay away.

BIANCA: I think perhaps you have fallen under the spell of my little club.

DOCTOR: It's dangerous, lethal. It used to be a Tardis.

BIANCA: My little secret revealed.

DOCTOR: Who are you, Bianca?

BIANCA: I made this place, and this place made me.

DOCTOR: It shouldn't even exist. It's a liability.

BIANCA: You sound like one of those dreary scientists, always quibbling about the stresses and strains on the dimensional interfaces, always fretting over whether the fabric of Time and Space will start to split.

DOCTOR: Exactly. You're playing a very dangerous game.

BIANCA: Each time I step onto that stage I am playing a fatal game. Perhaps this night, this song, will be the moment my delectable façade will split, the fabric of my very being might unravel for all to see.

DOCTOR: I'm not talking about a performance. I'm not talking about standing up there and belting out some number. I'm talking about this club being the nexus point for all sorts of unstable energies. The centre won't be able to hold, Bianca. It could have huge repercussions.

BIANCA: These dangerous spots are everywhere. In my experience the world is always ready to unravel.

And that is where you always find the cabaret. Wherever there is the threat of imminent calamity, you will find

a soul such as I, stepping into the limelight and singing, singing into the darkness.

DOCTOR: All very poetic, I'm sure.

BIANCA: What would it take to soothe a soul as troubled as yours, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Oh, I really don't know.

BIANCA: You seem to go racing from one thing to the next, trying to distract yourself.

DOCTOR: Well, at one point I was quite keen on fishing.

BIANCA: Really? Let me pour you another drink. Fishing, you say?

DOCTOR: Then I started to think it wasn't fair on the fish, and gave it up. Oh, you're right, I distract myself. What am I running away from?

BIANCA: Dare I say yourself?

DOCTOR: Oh hardly. Oh, that's the most awful psychobabble, you know. No. No, I've externalised all my demons very nicely in the form of, well, militaristic cyborgs and hell-bent dictators, and lunatic computers, and lizard men, and Yeti

BIANCA: How awful.

DOCTOR: And is anyone grateful, I ask myself? No. What do they do? They put me on trial.

BIANCA: Tribulations and a trial. Never mind, you're with Bianca now. She knows just what to do.

DOCTOR: I know that trial was all a set-up, but, no one is grateful really, in the end. There I go, week in, week out, tending to the security and safety of the cosmos in a million different ways, and no one knows, no one cares.

BIANCA: And there is no one waiting for you at the end of the day?

DOCTOR: Oh, them. Usually by the end of the day whoever's accompanying me tends to have been kidnapped, or locked up and needs rescuing. By me. I sound very bitter, don't I?

BIANCA: You sound very tired.

DOCTOR: Oh, I'm not usually this way. But you know, I am very tired. I could do with a good lie-down.

BIANCA: You've had no one to look after you. That's what you need. You need someone who will be your match.

(Strikes a match.)

DOCTOR: Light me up? I don't think so.

BIANCA: That woman.

DOCTOR: Hmm?

BIANCA: Iris. She seems to be very fond of you. Do you feel nothing for her?

DOCTOR: I, I don't know. I remember once suggesting that we team up. We were in Venice, oh, ages ago, just after Jo had left me and I was at a loose end. Iris took it as a marriage proposal of course. Well, that would never have worked out.

BIANCA: Because you are a loner.

DOCTOR: Of course. I am the Doctor.

BIANCA: And you walk in eternity, or some such.

DOCTOR: A heavy-handed metaphor, but yes. Oh, I can't see myself settling down.

BIANCA: Wherever it is you walk, Doctor, I walk too.

IRIS: Quick, hide everything. Shove the compact away. No, no, no, no, no, don't trap the worm. Someone's coming.

MICKEY: Your hearing's very good, Iris

IRIS: Oh yes, I'm preternatural, my love.

HENRY: What are you two doing in here?

MICKEY: Well, that's what I was asking her, Henry. I told her it was Miss Bianca's inner sanctum.

IRIS: Oh, it's a bit of a tip, isn't it? It's a wonder you haven't had the Environmental Health round.

HENRY: Bianca will be furious. She'll have my guts for garters.

IRIS: She might as well, the state of lingerie in here. Why are you so scared of her, Henry?

HENRY: Come on. You must leave, now.

IRIS: No. No, no, no. I'm interested. Why so worked up over the moods of some crummy chanteuse?

HENRY: It's her club.

IRIS: You run it.

MICKEY: It's Bianca's show, all of it.

IRIS: So, she's got above herself, has she?

MICKEY: Well, I suppose she's changed a bit. I mean, recently she's been getting

IRIS: Yes?

HENRY: I used to think we were a team, working to the same ends, but just lately she shows me no respect.

MICKEY: She's been talking to herself, or talking to no one at all.

IRIS: Hmm.

HENRY: I'm a laughing stock around here, thanks to her.

MICKEY: Oh no, Henry.

HENRY: Don't patronise me. I hear the whispers in this place. Oh, how I hear them.

IRIS: Sounds like you'd be best off getting shot of her.
MICKEY: Of Bianca? This place would be nothing without her.
HENRY: It's true. That voice of hers. We'd be lost without it.
IRIS: Rubbish!
HENRY: What?
IRIS: Anyone can liven up a place by belting out a song. Why, I had quite a voice myself once, you know. Oh yes, I once did a stint in Las Vegas, I'll have you know. About thirty years from now. That was in a different body, of course. Ooo, but the larynx is much the same.
MICKEY: Yes, yes, I'm sure, Iris, but it wouldn't be the same.
HENRY: It could be better.
MICKEY: Are you seriously thinking of put
HENRY: It might work. It might just work indeed.
MICKEY: But what about Bianca?
IRIS: Oh, I'm sure I don't know what you're suggesting, Henry.
HENRY: We'll do it. Put her on tonight.
MICKEY: Tonight?
IRIS: You're crackers. I can't. No. No, no, no. I won't.
HENRY: The solo spot at midnight. She'll make her debut then.
IRIS: I can't. No, no. No, no, please.(hears voices) All right.
HENRY: You hear that, Mickey? She agrees.
IRIS: But I. Oh, ecky thump. What have I gone and got myself into now? Oh crikey, the Doctor's going to kill me.
HENRY: A new star will shine brightly at the cabaret tonight, to draw the shadows closer.

DOCTOR: Please, no more drink for me. I've had quite enough.
BIANCA: Iris is in love with you. A real, fierce love. I know.
DOCTOR: How do you know?
BIANCA: And you have rebuffed her time and time again.
DOCTOR: Love. Huh. Wrote a treatise on the chromosomal origins of love once when I was a small boy. Proved categorically which gene began it, which enzymes carried it, which electrochemical receptors translated it. Took all the fun out of it. Got a rubbish grade too. My tutor told me I'd missed the point. It's held no mystique for me since, so don't talk to me about love.
BIANCA: Or you'll do what?
DOCTOR: Your voice did something very strange just then.
BIANCA: Ha! My voice. That's what they come here for. That's how I lure everyone in. My voice holds many mysteries, Doctor.
DOCTOR: Other voices, underneath your own, contained within you.
BIANCA: My sweet loveless Doctor, you investigate, you explore, you probe mysteries wherever you find them. Do you dare to probe mine?
DOCTOR: I
BIANCA: I think you do. I think you are falling for me, Doctor, head over heels. You are fascinated by me. You are entranced.
DOCTOR: (faint) Yes.
BIANCA: You are prepared to fling yourself at my feet.
DOCTOR: Oh, stop it! What are you doing, you terrible woman? You've got me drunk, you babbling at me. I wouldn't throw myself at anyone's feet.
BIANCA: No, Doctor? Come with me. Dance with me.

MICKEY: Oh, Mister Ashcroft, the pace is hotting up, is it not? Plots and counter-plots, and of course Bianca doesn't know that she's been ousted. Her place on the stage has been taken away from her. Henry's gone behind her back, working on his own agenda. But she's intent on seducing the Doctor, and she leads him through the tables, through the drunks and the dilettantes sprawled and agog as they watch her stately progress, tugging the Doctor by his cravat. Even the shadows draw back, holding their breath.

DOCTOR: Oh, what is this power you've got me under? I've never encountered anything like it.
BIANCA: Only receptors, proteins, genes. Isn't that right? Shh. Now, dance with me, hold me. Ah, that's it.
DOCTOR: Oh, no. Yes. I don't know.
BIANCA: Poor, poor Doctor. What is this power? It's woman, Doctor. All woman.

MICKEY: Henry, it's got rowdier in here.
HENRY: They want a show, and who can blame them? They can that Bianca is busy being engrossed in the Doctor over there.
MICKEY: Are you serious about putting Iris on stage?

HENRY: We'll see. Let's get them sorted out. Let's restore the atmosphere. Give a hand at the bar, Mickey. Pass out the House Special. On the house. We've got to get them ready.

MICKEY: Oh, look. Trouble.

HENRY: I'll see to them.

STURMER: Everyone! (gunshot) Put your hands in the air. This is a raid! Nobody move. You have been found in a bolt hole of decadence and vice. Your lives are forfeit. You will remain in your seats until I give you the order.

HENRY: Corporal Sturmer. How delightful to see you again. And your men.

STURMER: Ah, Henry. Did you enjoy my little entrance? Impressive, was it not?

HENRY: As ever, Corporal. You and your men cut very dashing figures. It does my heart good to see such strapping boys protecting us all.

STURMER: Drinks, Henry! Drinks and entertainments. That is why we are here. You scratch my back, I spare your life.

HENRY: Back to your amusements, everyone! Corporal Sturmer was having a little joke with us. Pay no more heed.

BIANCA: Boisterous animals. Now, Doctor

DOCTOR: There's something very odd about those SA thugs.

BIANCA: They come here most nights, flexing their vile muscles, making their threats.

DOCTOR: Yes, yes, yes, but there's something else. Look at them.

BIANCA: Those are private booths they're taking, Doctor. It's impolite to intrude on them. Look at me. Look only at me.

DOCTOR: It's their shadows. When you watch, they have extra shadows behind them. They don't move in synch with their corporeal bodies.

BIANCA: Your imagination, Doctor. The candlelight here throws such crazy shadows against the wall, who know whether what one really sees is true?

DOCTOR: No, no, There is something definitely wrong about them.

BIANCA: Don't stare. Look only at me. Wherever else do you need to look?

DOCTOR: Oh, I've been looking in the wrong places for everything since I was old enough to crawl.

BIANCA: Iris thinks you should go crawling back to her.

DOCTOR: Why are you so obsessed with Iris?

(Microphone feedback.)

HENRY: And now, ladies and gentlemen, and anyone else who might be interested. It's the time you have all been waiting for, the moment you breathlessly anticipate every evening at Bianca's. It's coming on close to midnight.

BIANCA: What? I had no idea of the time.

DOCTOR: For once, for the first time, neither did I.

BIANCA: He didn't give me my cue.

DOCTOR: Don't go.

BIANCA: I am due to perform. I must go, darling.

HENRY: And in a change to our usual schedule, this evening we have a very special surprise for you. It is high time that we rang in the new here at Bianca's, and we have something so new, so incredible, so perfectly delectable, that your eyes are liable to pop right out of your head.

BIANCA: What is he talking about? New? New? This is my time on stage. Midnight is always mine.

DOCTOR: Not tonight, it seems.

BIANCA: What pantomime is this?

HENRY: So, without further ado.

BIANCA: This will teach me to indulge myself.

HENRY: Let me introduce the new star in the firmament that is Bianca's cabaret, that slinkiest transtemporal adventuress of them all, Ms Iris Wildthyme!

DOCTOR: What on Earth?

(Whoops and cheers.)

DOCTOR: What is she doing? She looks, she looks

BIANCA: Like a dog's dinner! Oh, she'll pay for this. Henry too. This is my show, I am the talent!

IRIS: ♪ You say you never wanted her in your hair. ♪

BIANCA: What is she doing?

DOCTOR: Iris, stop it!

IRIS: ♪ Well, as you know she's famous for it. Her name alone induces sighs of despair. Well, as you know she's famous for it. Aside from vats of liquor, your cupboard is bare. You damn her to the devil but she's already there. No one else besides her, you're beside yourself with joy. (the worms sing along) The hopes are never far away ♪

WORMS: Destroy them. Destroy them all. Those with weapons to hand, turn on your neighbours.

IRIS: ♪ You say you never wanted her in your hair. Well, don't you know she's famous for it? ♪

BIANCA: It shouldn't be like this. The songs are supposed to bring harmony, not this.

MICKEY: Get your hands off of him, you monster.

STURMER: A fight you want? We'll give you a fight.

DOCTOR: Iris! Stop singing! Stop singing or you'll destroy us all!

[Part Three]

DOCTOR: Iris! Stop singing! Stop singing!

BIANCA: It's no good, Doctor. She doesn't hear you. She's under a spell.

DOCTOR: And the audience under hers. Mickey, the microphone lead.

MICKEY: What?

DOCTOR: Listen to me. The lead to Iris's microphone, yank it out!

IRIS: ♪ You say you never wanted her in your hair. ♪

DOCTOR: While I put a lid on things here.

IRIS: ♪ Well, don't you know she's famous for it? ♪

(Thump.)

DOCTOR: Ow!

BIANCA: Perhaps you are, dear. A world-famous laughing stock.

MICKEY: What happened?

DOCTOR: Where's Henry? He has to take charge of this rabble.

MICKEY: He's, he's been hit by someone. He's out cold. Doctor.

DOCTOR: Oh, he'll be all right. Perhaps someone could take him to his office?

MICKEY: Doctor, if the crowd gets out of hand again.

DOCTOR: Oh, really. Ladies and gentlemen, please settle down. You there, put down that chair. Thank you. Now, on behalf of the management may I apologise for the temporary interlude in tonight's performance. The iridescent Iris Wildthyme is unwell, but very soon the cavalcade of coruscating cabaret cornucopia

MICKEY: Come on, Iris, love. Let's get you down.

BIANCA: Little fool. Anyone can see she's just not ready for this yet.

DOCTOR: Will continue unabated. Probably. Your appeasement and pleasure is all the management wishes, and to this end er. I'm losing them. Bianca, Mickey, what can you give them?

BIANCA: House Special all round, on the house!

DOCTOR: Is that wise?

BIANCA: Just what we all need to buck us up.

MICKEY: Oh, the man behind the bar, he's bleeding.

BARMAN: Sorry, Mickey, Bianca.

MICKEY: Doctor?

DOCTOR: I'm not a doctor of medicine.

MICKEY: No, I was going to ask if you'd mind serving a few drinks.

DOCTOR: Neither am I a barmaid.

BIANCA: Please, anyone, this is serious. Is there a barman in the house?

ALLIS: I'll step in.

BALLIS: I'll help out.

BIANCA: Oh, Allis, Ballis, thank you. Heinrich, play something soothing.

DOCTOR: That should help.

IRIS: Doctor. Oh, me head. Oh, I'm sorry about all that up on t'stage. I wasn't meself.

DOCTOR: Oh, you were yourself, all right, but so was something else.

IRIS: Oh, what was going on?

DOCTOR: Some sort of psychic projection of an aggressive will through a rhyming incantation set to tones of a definite pitch, organised melodically and harmonically.

IRIS: You mean, a song of evil?

DOCTOR: Mmm, an evil intelligence hi-jacking the harmonic structure to bend the wills of others. Iris, rest. Take it easy for a while. We'll talk later.

IRIS: Oh. Oh, me head. Oh, ay, I'll not argue for once. I'll just go and perch over there, all right, chuck?

MICKEY: What caused all that? We never had any trouble here beyond what Sturmer stirs up.

DOCTOR: You mean you didn't hear what was happening up there? The voices?

MICKEY: Well, I heard Iris doing her number. She was a bit off-key at times. Probably just first night jitters.

DOCTOR: So, a silent song of violence.

MICKEY: Och, look at this mess. Down to me to clear it up, I suppose. I'll not get off till four tonight.

STURMER: Mickey, Bianca.

BIANCA: Corporal Sturmer

STURMER: I have decided not to inform the authorities of tonight's insurrection, despite attempted violence against myself and my men.

DOCTOR: In self-defence, I'll wager.

STURMER: You wish me to change my position on this matter?

BIANCA: No.

DOCTOR: Yes. A step to the left, please. A step back nearer the light. There.

STURMER: Are you mad?

MICKEY: Doctor, don't upset him.

STURMER: Your friend here was hit on the head, perhaps?

DOCTOR: Oh no, I'm quite unscathed.

STURMER: You still could be.

BIANCA: Gentlemen. Please, Herr Sturmer, forgive my silly friend here. You are most kind and fair. Come, we must have a drink.

STURMER: Yes, I must.

DOCTOR: One for him, and one for his shadow.

MICKEY: What?

DOCTOR: His shadow wasn't quite true, out of synch with the rest of him, like it's having a job keeping up with the goose-stepping.

MICKEY: Doctor, one think I've learnt working here. It really doesn't pay to look at anything too closely.

MICKEY: Oh, don't I sound young, Mister Ashcroft? Well. Well, I was. And d'you know, I believed what I said too. When you're young and happy, you never stop to think too long, to study too closely. Well, if you do, you lose the magic. But that night the Doctor and Iris were stuck at the club with nowhere to go, all alone, and they were questioning lots of things.

DOCTOR: So, how are you feeling now?

IRIS: Oh, these cushions are a bit lumpy. I can feel the floor through them. Oh, Doctor, I wish I was tucked up in my own little bed aboard the bus. Funny though, there is something about this place that's very homely, very familiar.

DOCTOR: I imagine that's the point of a place like this.

IRIS: No, no, no, no, no. No, no, it's more than that.

DOCTOR: Hmm. Well, your mind was recently the carrier for some form of sinister intelligence. It's probably left your perceptions all of a muddle.

IRIS: Yeah, all those little voices.

DOCTOR: Tell me about the voices, Iris.

IRIS: Well, it began when the bus force-landed on Sagius Minor. Gravity bubble, I think. Anyway, it turned out Sagius Minor's where Bianca distils her booze, right?

DOCTOR: Mmm.

IRIS: Well, I accidentally half-inched a crate. Good stuff too. A mind-altering experience, you could say.

DOCTOR: The voices told you to come here, where the drink was sold?

IRIS: One lot saying one thing, and one lot saying another. Oh look, I know you don't approve, Doctor, but the reason I've been drinking so much lately is, well, it's to try and understand what's happening. You know, to sort of convince meself that I'm not going mad.

DOCTOR: Oh Iris, I'm so sorry.

IRIS: That's all right. Ay, it's given me some right good nights out on the tiles, though, hey, hey! So it's not all bad.

DOCTOR: Oh, Iris.

IRIS: Oh, what's wrong with being drunk?

DOCTOR: As my good friend Douglas once said, ask the glass of water.

IRIS: No. Ask the glass of tequila. Or the worm in the bottom of the bottle.

DOCTOR: What?

IRIS: I'll explain, I'll explain later, because (yawn) you know, Doctor, I think I'm conking out already. Oh, ecky thump, I'm a shadow of me former self.

DOCTOR: Shadows. Have you noticed, Iris, Sturmer and his men, maybe some of the other guests too, they're not quite

(Snoring.)

DOCTOR: Oh, insufferable woman.

(Telephone rings.)

HENRY: (groans) This is Henry.

WORMS [OC]: Henry.

HENRY: Oh, my head.

WORMS [OC]: You've been seeing stars.

HENRY: I was attacked. Hit from behind in that brawl.

WORMS [OC]: The brawl was good.

HENRY: The Doctor soon stopped it.

WORMS [OC]: The purpose of the demonstration was still achieved. The Pro Faction now know their enemies are active and strong. The Anti Faction have tasted power, and will be desperate to do so again. So, both sides shall reassess the situation, and we know what they'll decide in the end. Is the machinery prepared for full operation?

HENRY: Er, I'm making headway.

WORMS [OC]: Too slow!

HENRY: I've been using the most excellent minds we can attract.

WORMS [OC]: No go.

HENRY: Then what would you have me

WORMS [OC]: The Doctor will show you.

HENRY: That domineering buffoon?

WORMS [OC]: Wait, watch, and learn. Seeds have been sown, Henry.

(Drink poured.)

ALLIS: What?

DOCTOR: Only me. And only orange juice.

BALLIS: (yawns) What time is it?

DOCTOR: Local Berlin time, close to dawn.

ALLIS: Bless Bianca. Free lodging for the night.

BALLIS: Least she could do after all our impromptu bar-tending.

ALLIS: That insane brawl. Why she insists of having a doorway somewhere as backwards as Earth...

BALLIS: It's her favourite planet.

DOCTOR: Mine too. I worry about it dreadfully. Particularly when there's an unstable interdimensional portal drilled into its biosphere.

ALLIS: Oh Doctor, really. You do go on.

DOCTOR: Your assurances and explanations yesterday didn't exactly comfort me.

BALLIS: Little over your head were they, old boy?

DOCTOR: Over my head? I can assure you, dear sir

ALLIS: Ooo, here's Henry. He, I'm sure, can explain it to you in terms you can understand, Doctor.

DOCTOR: In terms I

HENRY: Good morning, gentlemen. Hair of the dog, perhaps?

BALLIS: Oh. Decadent, but I suppose

DOCTOR: Isn't it a little early?

HENRY: Never too early to be under the influence, Doctor.

BALLIS: Henry, we were just discussing this club's unique relationship with local spatio-temporal geometry. Care to explain?

HENRY: Well, you know I'm no expert. An interested layman, nothing more. But Bianca's, as I understand it, is powered by some sort of fused symbiosis with the nexus point.

BALLIS: Very good.

HENRY: Yes. It feeds from the seething energies of the nexus and leaks back out a near identical amount of waste energy.

DOCTOR: And that energy is used to sustain the wormholes through to all the planets that subscribe to Bianca's.

BALLIS: With perfect stability.

DOCTOR: You are the same Vertigo Ballis and André Allis who collapsed an entire star system while demonstrating such stability?

ALLIS: Meow.

BALLIS: Er, mmm.

HENRY: How could stability be maintained then, Doctor?

DOCTOR: This club is constructed on an interdimensional precipice. It's only a matter of time before it falls over the edge. However, I suppose if you squeezed the local wimps

BALLIS: I'm sorry!

ALLIS: What can he mean?

DOCTOR: Wimps. Weakly interacting massive particles, as well you know. Such dark matter, if sufficiently compressed and moderated by the codium links from whatever's left at the heart of this poor vessel's time rotor, well, it would make for a slightly firmer foundation.

HENRY: Brilliant. Elegant. Yes, it could work.

DOCTOR: So enthuses the layman?

HENRY: Yes, I mean it all sounds very clever. Well, gentlemen, I'll leave you to your conversation. All a little over my head.

ALLIS: (slight Worm echo) Yes, well, bravo, Doctor. Could have done with you on the team back on Sirius B.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry, is something wrong?

ALLIS: I. (normal) What's that? No, I'm as fit as a flea. Just remarked I could have done with you on the team

back

DOCTOR: Sorry, never been much of a team player, I'm afraid. Now, I wonder if Iris has slept it off. It's high time I had some proper answers.

(Telephone ringing.)

HENRY: Did you hear? Did you hear what he said?

WORMS [OC]: Life will be better than ever at some stage.

HENRY: I believe it. I believe it.

WORMS [OC]: The codium links?

HENRY: I'll locate them. I'll not fail you. The Andromedan Sisterhood, they're knowledgeable in that field.

When they come in, a few glasses

WORMS [OC]: Hurry! We must become!

HENRY: You shall become.

IRIS: There she is, sleeping like a lamb. Or mutton dressed up as it. Goodnight, Bianca.

(Door closes.)

IRIS: So, there'll be no one in the dressing room then. Apart from the special guest star in Bianca's compact. Yes, here you are then. Oh, but no. No, it wasn't you speaking to me yesterday. You, my little fellow, are a stranger, which means that somewhere around here... Yes, a bottle of *my* booze she tried to make out was hers. She pinched it. And floating near the bottom. Come on, come here. Ah, gotcha. Gotcha in the palm of my hand. It was you, wasn't it, eh, last night, making me drive the whole club batty. I said I'd help, but this. Hmm? Oh, you really don't get on, do you? So, what's the story? Two opposing camps, is it, feuding, at war? You're normally so chatty. But now I want the truth. Oh, don't make me squeeze it out of you. All right, let me give you a hand. (drinks) Come on, speak up. (drinks) Oh, are you there yet?

WORMS [OC]: We are here.

IRIS: Bianca's worm.

WORMS [OC]: And so are we.

IRIS: The other side. You told me this Bianca was holding your race at gunpoint, that she was going to wipe out the lot of you.

WORMS [OC]: And so she will.

WORMS [OC]: No.

IRIS: I agree with him. It's codswallop. Come on, what's really going on?

WORMS [OC]: The Anti Faction will betray our race.

WORMS [OC]: Pro Faction lies. Bianca will abuse our uniqueness.

WORMS [OC]: It was her who gave us purpose, exploited the nexus point and allowed our awareness to flourish. Until the nexus point was fashioned around our tiny world, we knew nothing.

MICKEY: Och, these blasted tapes. They've worn too thin under the weight of the Worm's explorations. Oh, they did go on. Och, no, no. No, stop your frittering. Let me at the spools this time, Mister Ashcroft. It's probably easier if I explain it to you myself. You see, the Worms were split into two factions. One lot had allied themselves with Bianca. They stood for law and order, their law passed over the home universe in order that nothing else would evolve. Life would stay static, arrested in its development just as they were.

WORMS [OC]: We peeked ahead through the millennia ahead of us. We became unnatural, hairy, with appendages. Limbs.

WORMS [OC]: Like you, with your complex form, your multitudinous organs. But we, we are perfect. Simplicity, sleek and streamlined. We chose never to evolve, never to change.

IRIS: Time never stands still. Believe you me, change is essential. It gives us hope. As the song goes, life will be better than ever at some stage, you know?

WORMS [OC]: Change is essential, and the peoples of the universe must change. Must become like us.

MICKEY: They would hold the universe still in the thrall of Bianca's voice, their mental powers resonating out along its harmonious wavelengths via the wormholes she and Henry had set up. Och, it sound a lot of nonsense, I know, but they meant to do it.

WORMS [OC]: If Bianca's ambitions are fulfilled, the Pro Faction will possess every ugly, ungainly creature that ever existed.

IRIS: Through the booze?

WORMS [OC]: The elixir channels our power.

WORMS [OC]: And the nexus point will link Bianca and the Pro Faction to a billion worlds. The peoples of the universe shall be in her thrall.

IRIS: (drinks) But what about you, eh? You've tried to possess me too.

WORMS [OC]: And succeeded. We fooled you. You helped us squirm into Bianca's distillery that we might

control others.

IRIS: What is it you want, eh? Exactly what is it?

MICKEY: They wanted to stop Bianca's lot. They weren't after a single perfect moment forever throughout the universe, they wanted a single awful moment of violence and chaos and destruction. And they were going to use the psionic whatevers of Iris's singing from the nexus point to do it! That scene in the club when Iris started singing and all hell broke loose was just a tiny wee demonstration of what their warmed wormy minds craved.

WORMS [OC]: Celebrate now. The glorious base Earth be now. Those who live solely for the moment, they never change, never progress. Unreasoning violence is our friend. Loveless sex our ally. The severance of all meaningful ties with all other living things, our goal.

WORMS [OC]: This is what the Anti Faction will try to bring about, but we will never let them. We call for ubiquitous order, a single voice sung by all creeds in harmony.

IRIS: No! Bianca's benevolent dictatorship's no better. You're insane, the lot of you. I'm having no part of this.

WORMS [OC]: No. We need you yet, Time Lady.

IRIS: Ah. I, I'll, oh, wha

MICKEY: D'you see? They were both being used. Bianca willingly and Iris without knowing it. And Henry was using them all. He knew what the Worms were up to, just as he knew how it would all end, and how he and his masters would benefit. Now, where was the Doctor? Oh yes, looking for Iris around the club, but about to find

DOCTOR: Bianca!

BIANCA: Greetings, my dear.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry, I didn't see you sitting there.

BIANCA: The shadows seem thicker than ever tonight.

DOCTOR: Night? But moments ago it was morning.

BIANCA: Time plays tricks.

DOCTOR: Around the nexus point it certainly does.

BIANCA: Come. Sit by me, Doctor.

DOCTOR: I haven't really the time to go idling on a banquette with you.

BIANCA: But here you are anyway.

DOCTOR: Here I am, with everything about to come crashing in on our heads.

BIANCA: (drinks) Look at Henry bustling about, cleaning round and preparing for this evening as if nothing had changed. But everything has changed, for me. Here, drink.

DOCTOR: Oh, no.

BIANCA: Oh drink, to please me.

DOCTOR: Well, perhaps a little. What will you do now, Bianca?

BIANCA: Now that I've been usurped, thrown off my perch by some strutting little madam in fake eyelashes and ill-fitting leopard skin? By someone who's gone striding in beyond her depth?

DOCTOR: That's Iris, all right.

BIANCA: Oh, everyone takes me for a ride. Everyone walks over silly, good-natured Bianca.

DOCTOR: Hmm. That's been said of me before, you know. We let all sorts of fools take advantage of our softer sides.

BIANCA: Do you have a softer side, Doctor?

DOCTOR: You're leaning on it.

BIANCA: And smearing mascara all down your waistcoat.

DOCTOR: You know, you've had the most peculiar effect on me, Bianca.

BIANCA: That will be the booze.

DOCTOR: There's something very strange in this, right enough. But there's something else. I wouldn't know what to call it.

BIANCA: And yet you seem to know the right words for all kinds of strange and intangible concepts and ideas.

DOCTOR: This seems less intangible every minute. Can you see them moving through the walls? And the air, the air is swarming with

BIANCA: Dust motes. Smoke. Nothing unusual.

DOCTOR: Presences, bodies. They're wormholes, tentatively opening. Tequila worm holes.

MICKEY: Iris, you've been dozing again. Look, we haven't time. Henry's waiting for a run-through out on the stage.

IRIS: Eh? What? What was that? Oh. Oh, I do feel queer.

MICKEY: Look, it's your rehearsals, Iris. You're late. Henry says you can't let it get out of control again.

Tonight you have to be perfect.

IRIS: But, wait a minute, there's something else. There's something I have to do. Oh, I forgot.

MICKEY: Look, I'm sure there'll be a lovely crowd. Now, after the run-through, we have to have a fitting for your frock.

IRIS: What's the matter, Mickey? You don't look right, luv.

MICKEY: I'm just trying to get on with the job, keeping things normal, getting the show on the road as usual.

IRIS: Yes, but something's got you spooked.

MICKEY: How can it not? Everyone's acting so weird. Weevils in Bianca's make-up and

IRIS: Worms? That was it. Something about worms. Just before I blacked out, they were talking to me.

MICKEY: Don't start on that again.

IRIS: They were! Oh bugger, it's gone again.

MICKEY: And Henry, he's doing something really odd. The Doctor was right, there's something in the shadows of this place, and Henry's bossing them about. I've been watching him lately, letting people in, and when they walk past his booth it's like they're joined by another shadow, a shadow that isn't their own.

IRIS: Oh, stop it. You're giving me the willies.

MICKEY: No one's quite themselves. Allis and Ballis, it's as if something's got into them. They echo when they talk. And the Doctor.

IRIS: What about him?

MICKEY: He's with Bianca. She won't leave his side.

IRIS: Oh, he's terrible with the ladies. He pretends not to be, oh, but he's an awful old goat.

MICKEY: I've seen that look in the eyes of a hundred other men. He's smitten.

IRIS: He what?

BIANCA: Doctor, at the nexus point, with everything breaking down, it doesn't have to result in chaos, you know.

DOCTOR: Yes, it does, I'm afraid, and believe me, it will.

BIANCA: No, it won't. Not with one voice holding sway. One perfect voice.

DOCTOR: It's been tried before. Really, again and again. I don't approve of dictators, benevolent or otherwise, I'm afraid.

BIANCA: You believe in aristocracy, though. You are a Time Lord. On your homeworld you believed in your right to rule.

DOCTOR: I walked away from that.

BIANCA: But you still hold yourself separate, believe in your right to judge, to interfere.

DOCTOR: I'm not sure I like the way this conversation is going.

BIANCA: You have to believe in that right or else how else would you do what you do? And that's why you took it so hard when you were placed on trial again. Because you knew that they, like you, believed absolutely in their right.

DOCTOR: Poppycock! A gratuitous gathering of garrulous gallimaufries. I don't just people, I judge their pain. I judge the magnitude of their oppression, their wanting, and I try to help.

BIANCA: Yes, their wanting, your help. What if there was a way to make the celestial spheres ring with harmony? What if there were creatures, tiny neglected beings possessed of incredible powers, and they told you they could help you bring about harmony throughout the universe?

DOCTOR: I'd never believe them.

BIANCA: That old scepticism of yours.

DOCTOR: Maybe. But I refuse to be duped.

BIANCA: What about trust?

DOCTOR: It takes a lot for me to trust.

BIANCA: And love?

IRIS: Smitten, is he? I'll give that Bianca a piece of my mind.

MICKEY: Iris, wait. Iris, don't cause a scene.

IRIS: Where is she, that old bag you used to have singing for you before... Wait a minute. Oh, hang on. It's all coming back. What the worms were saying to me. Two factions vying for power, vying over the instabilities here and round the club. Two champions, me and her.

MICKEY: Look, I don't know what you're talking about.

IRIS: Bianca's in with the other lot, the ones who want to take over everything. My lot want me to stop her, but I said. Wait a minute. What did I say? Oh, heavens.

DOCTOR: Iris, what's the shouting about?

IRIS: Oh, Doctor! Am I glad to see you. Oh, you've brought that dreadful woman with you.

BIANCA: Dreadful woman? My dear, you have no idea who you're talking to.

IRIS: Ha! I see. What's the matter, eh? Can't you get a proper man of your own, eh, you have to keep barging in and taking someone else's?

BIANCA: And he's yours, is he, dear?

IRIS: He's more mine than anyone else's. He just doesn't know it yet. But me and the Doctor
DOCTOR: Stop it at once.
IRIS: We go way back.
BIANCA: You've an over-inflated opinion of yourself, and an over-inflated everything else, as it happens.
IRIS: That's it! I'm not having any more of this. Come here. Come on.
DOCTOR: Ladies! Ladies!
(Fight, fight!)
IRIS: Put your lights out.
MICKEY: Help me with her.
BIANCA: You awful, awful, common little woman.
IRIS: Let go of me!
(Fight continues.)
MICKEY: I'll go and fetch Henry. Henry!
BIANCA: Haven't you ever stopped to think for a single second that the Doctor and I might go way back too, Iris?
IRIS: You? Ta! He's only just met you.
BIANCA: Doctor, does it really feel as if we've only just met?
DOCTOR: No. Bianca's right. There is something between us.
IRIS: What?
DOCTOR: Something that goes beyond Time.
IRIS: I don't, I don't believe I'm listening to this.
DOCTOR: Something I don't fully understand.
IRIS: What are you saying?
DOCTOR: I, I think I've fallen in love.
BIANCA: Oh, bless your hearts, Doctor.
IRIS: No. No, I don't believe it.
DOCTOR: It's true.
IRIS: (crying) After all this time, all these years, wishing and hoping and, and, and thinking one day, one day you might just turn around and realise, and, and stop running away from me, maybe you'd see at last who it was who loved you.
DOCTOR: Iris, I'm sorry.
IRIS: I knew I couldn't make you love me, but I thought if I, if I stuck around, you know, sort of like waited. I don't believe it. She's ogling you. She's stolen your mind. She's hooked you up with those horrible wormy things and it's all part of her masterplan to conquer the universe.
BIANCA: Or maybe I'm just irresistible. (laughs) Prove it to me, Doctor. Prove your devotion.
DOCTOR: How?
BIANCA: You know what Iris is up to. She's consorting with the wrong worms. The Anti Faction, not mine. Not the ones pledged to harmony. We have to get her out of the way, for the sake of the universe.
IRIS: What's this, eh, threats? Oh, how tawdry. Ha. A pistol stuck in your garter?
BIANCA: Take it, Doctor. Do what you have to.
IRIS: Oh Doctor, you can't. You
DOCTOR: Shoot her? Is that what you're saying?
BIANCA: Love is a dangerous business.
DOCTOR: Murder? For you? Come with me, Iris.
IRIS: What? Doctor
DOCTOR: I said, come with me!
IRIS: No!
(Bianca laughs.)
IRIS: No!
BIANCA: You poor fools, the pair of you. Poor dears.

MICKEY: You may well wonder why Bianca's going to so much trouble over Iris, Mister Ashcroft. It was her own club. Why didn't she just bar Iris, toss her out onto the celestial pavement? But, you see, she couldn't. She needed something from Iris, something only Iris could give her. And as for her snaring the Doctor like that, well, it wasn't just for play. I think she really did care for him, just as Iris did. Just as Iris did.

IRIS: Bianca's dressing room? What have you brought me here for? You're not really going to shoot me, are you?
DOCTOR: Shh. Of course not. She thinks she's controlling me. We just need time to think.
IRIS: You're on my side. You don't love her. You believe me.
DOCTOR: Oh, I don't know what to think anymore.
IRIS: I believed every word out there. Oh, you had me all worried.
DOCTOR: I feel like Bianca is familiar. It's a feeling I haven't known since, oh, the end of my trial when I

faced the Valeyard and I found out who he was really.

IRIS: I heard the rumours. What was he? You never did say.

DOCTOR: He was me. A much later, much deadlier version of me. A distillation of all the most wicked sides of myself, escaped from my time line far in the future. A deadly shadow thrown out of his time to wreak havoc.

IRIS: That sounds awful. Well, don't feel like you're giving into that side of yourself now, luvvie. You've seen sense right in the nick of time.

DOCTOR: Yes. I've seen sense.

IRIS: So, now we have to work out how we're going to patch up this God-awful dimensional instability Bianca has created. But not here. There. There are worms in here, in the compact, in the puddle under that bed.

DOCTOR: No. You can't.

IRIS: Doctor?

DOCTOR: It's the way to solve everything.

IRIS: What?

(Gun cocked.)

DOCTOR: Bianca is right, Iris. You, my dear, will have to die.

WORMS: Die! Die! Die!

[Part Four]

HENRY: What's all this?

BIANCA: Henry, watch out. He's got a gun.

HENRY: How dare you try to murder my new chanteuse.

(Two gunshots.)

IRIS: Well, that's the chaise longue shot to buggery.

(The Doctor screams.)

DOCTOR: Oh, get them out of my head! They're talking to me. Worms writhing. Get them out of my head!

MICKEY: Oh, whatever's got into him?

IRIS: Lashings of tequila from the love of a bad woman. Oh, the poor dear. He thought he was immune.

DOCTOR: (groans) What was I doing?

IRIS: You don't remember?

DOCTOR: Not a jot of it.

HENRY: You were about to shoot my new chanteuse.

DOCTOR: Huh?

MICKEY: He's right.

IRIS: Oh, you had such a nasty look on your face.

MICKEY: I think we should all calm down.

DOCTOR: Where's Bianca now? She has some explaining to do.

IRIS: Never mind her. Here, you can rest your head on my bosom.

DOCTOR: No, no, really, I'm fine. It won't happen again. Losing control like that. Iris, whatever have we got ourselves involved in?

IRIS: What we need is some fresh air. Oh, my head's spinning, and swarming. Even out here those creatures are trying to talk to me again. They're getting stronger.

DOCTOR: We need to clear our heads. A walk outside could help. But which outside?

IRIS: The Berlin one. I think I need pastries.

DOCTOR: We need to plan our next move away from the influences in there.

HENRY: Well, here's your cab.

DOCTOR: What was that?

IRIS: Hmm?

DOCTOR: When Henry opened the cab door, something shot out past him into the club.

HENRY: It was nothing.

DOCTOR: Another shadow. That's where they come from. He's having them brought by taxi from, from the pick-up points?

IRIS: Shh, Doctor, shh. We don't want him knowing we know just yet, do we? (loud) Goodbye, Henry.

(Taxi drives off.)

(And arrives.)

DOCTOR: Ah, Berlin, away from that mind-atrophying atmosphere.

IRIS: Oh, God, oh, that daylight don't half make you blink.

DOCTOR: It's not quite right. Everything looks oddly flat. The dimensional instabilities are spreading out here too.

IRIS: Hold on. Stop. Stop the cab!

DOCTOR: What is it?

IRIS: There she is. You get in here now, missy.

BIANCA: Oh, is this a kidnapping? Should I sit on my hands and remain silent?

(Cab drives off.)

IRIS: Not silent, chuck. You've got a few questions to answer first.

DOCTOR: Indeed. I'm very disappointed, Bianca.

BIANCA: Then I will tell you all.

IRIS: Just like that? Oh ho, ho, ho, hang on. I think she's messing with our minds again, Doctor.

BIANCA: I assure you I am not.

DOCTOR: Let's listen to what she has to say.

IRIS: Over some lovely big cakes. Oh, I could eat a scabby dog right now.

BIANCA: I too have an appetite.

WAITER: Kaffee?

DOCTOR: Weil danke.

WAITER: Oh, English. Okay.

DOCTOR: What?

(Liquid poured.)

IRIS: Mmm, hot, black and sweet. And he serves a decent

DOCTOR: Now please, Iris, this is serious.

IRIS: I'm as serious as you about what I do, just not necessarily the way I do it.

BIANCA: And just what is it that you do, Iris Wildthyme?

IRIS: I'm a traveller.

BIANCA: Ha! You're a chicken. You scratch around in Time's farmyard for scraps of sustenance, cluck about after this one like a dotty doting mother hen

IRIS: How dare you!

BIANCA: No, Iris. No, you will never be free of me. But I will free myself of you. Your aimless adventuring, your half-cocked philanthropy. Evidence of the past can be tampered with. Isn't that what you once said, my dear?

DOCTOR: Now just wait a minute, Bianca.

BIANCA: I will not wait another second to revenge myself on this wastrel old soak. All my potential, all my youth.

IRIS: What, what, what are you saying to me?

BIANCA: I am all that you will be, Iris. At the end of your days when you shuck off your last skin, you will find me waiting underneath. You are me. You think it was mere chance that brought you blundering into affairs, Iris? Huh, I planned everything. Everything.

IRIS: But why?

BIANCA: Because I want you, what is left of you.

DOCTOR: She wants your remaining lives. You witless imitator, at least my dark self had an ounce of style.

IRIS: Doctor!

DOCTOR: Well, this is so typical of you copycat amateurs. Whoever heard of a diabolical denouement occurring in a patisserie!

IRIS: Excuse me! She wants my remaining regenerations!

DOCTOR: And where did she get that idea, I wonder?

IRIS: But how could she?

DOCTOR: Oh, let me see. That gun I pulled on you. Yes, just as I thought. A distillation chamber in the pearl handle. It would have sucked up your lifeforce like a sponge the second your regeneration kicked in. She'd have absorbed it herself later on. Simple.

IRIS: No. No, I mean how *could* she? To her own flesh and blood?

BIANCA: I have to hasten the change. You are but an ugly pupae, a chrysalis caging the beautiful butterfly I can be. And through the power of the worm entities, I shall flutter around the universe, the planets my pretty flowers, each galaxy a shady bower.

DOCTOR: Elegantly put, Bianca, but I'll stop you.

BIANCA: Stop me? You, whom I can place in my thrall as soon as look at you? No, you are powerless to prevent the er, the metamorphosis of specious principle!

DOCTOR: That's one of mine as well! You plagiarising

IRIS: Oh, I can't deal with this! I can't! I can't!

(Runs out.)

DOCTOR: Iris, wait.

BIANCA: Your taxi's still waiting. Here you are, waiter. Keep the change. (laughs) Change should always be for keeps

IRIS: Taxi! Oh, there you are.

DOCTOR: Iris, wait for me.
IRIS: Why? So you can slag off my lack of originality?
DOCTOR: No, so I
IRIS: Oh, get in if you're going to.
DOCTOR: I know how you're feeling.
IRIS: Do you?
(Taxi drives off.)
IRIS: Of course you do.
DOCTOR: You catch yourself looking back at yourself. Have I changed so much over the centuries, you wonder? When will it happen, that one turning point in our lives, that one moment our fate is sealed.
IRIS: Can I have a cuddle?
DOCTOR: Hmm? Just a comforting one, all right?
IRIS: Oh, oh, you're dead cuddly. Actually, I like this body.
DOCTOR: Oh, Iris, you've just endured a trauma that would... The cab driver didn't ask us where we were going.
IRIS: Where can he go? It's Henry's cab. It'll take us back, back to my club!
DOCTOR: So why the sudden urgency? Driver?
IRIS: He's gone barmy!
DOCTOR: He's not in his own mind. Possessed.
IRIS: Bianca!
DOCTOR: Oh, no. The upholstery. When she sat on her hands she was fiddling with it, remember? Ah! Exhibit A.
IRIS: It's one of those distillation thingies, like in her gun.
DOCTOR: This was all a trap. She knew that if she told you the truth you'd fly off the handle and tear off. She still needs you dead.
IRIS: Where are we going?
DOCTOR: Into the nearest really hard wall, I imagine, once he's built up enough speed for the crash to be fatal.
IRIS: Should we jump for it?
DOCTOR: In this traffic? One chance. If we can trigger the interdimensional jump.
IRIS: Of course! These cabs are dual function, roadways and spaceways.
DOCTOR: Right. The lever's jammed. Sabotaged. Help me. Give me your earring.
IRIS: Dressing up?
DOCTOR: I just need the back of it. If we can, thank you, jam it in the workings, a single spark's all we need. Oh, come on. Come on! Dah! Phew.
IRIS: Back at Bianca's.
DRIVER: Oh, my head.
DOCTOR: Once around the block, driver, then back to the club.
IRIS: Beautiful, isn't it, then nexus point.
DOCTOR: A dart of light in a sea of shadow.
IRIS: Speaking of shadows, look.
DOCTOR: Oh dear.
IRIS: Doctor, the taxis, gathering at the doors, and you can bet your barnet Henry's got them on the guest list.
DOCTOR: So that they can get into the guests. But why? What are they? And how can they stay stable in the maelstrom of energies generated by... oh no. That's why Henry's been pumping Allis and Ballis for information on dimensional cohesion, to stabilise an eye in the storm. And the knowledge I gave him will have made that possible! I am a fool. A silly showoff-ish
IRIS: Doctor! Worms.
DOCTOR: What, they can reach you out here?
IRIS: Mmm. I can't quite make it out. I need a drink.
DOCTOR: Yes, I think you do. We must know what they're planning next.

(Telephone rings.)
HENRY: Henry's office.
WORMS [OC]: Is the way prepared?
HENRY: Almost. The codium links have been stabilised. And Bianca's back, not pleased her little trick's backfired on her. Iris is close by too.
WORMS [OC]: We knew that the Anti Faction's puppet would live. And the nexus, past and future, are today.
HENRY: And our destiny beckons us on.
WORMS [OC]: Good show, Henry.
HENRY: Oh, it certainly shall be.

IRIS: Here we are again then. Hey, wait a minute. This club, it's what's left of her Tardis. Oh, my lovely, rattley shiny red bus. This is what becomes of it.

DOCTOR: So it would seem. I'm sorry, Iris.

IRIS: Oh, nothing will be the same again. Oh, must be why I felt so at home here.

DOCTOR: Now other things are making themselves at home here. Look. The shadows.

IRIS: We need to know what's going on. Ey up, I'd better get drinking.

DOCTOR: Cunning little creatures, these worms. The alcohol is their medium. It channels their powers.

IRIS: I know. And Bianca's poured so much down so many locals' necks, it's a piece of kuchen for the worms to influence them.

DOCTOR: But why has Henry helped her? Iris, where do you think your central column might be?

IRIS: Hang on. I can practically read Bianca's mind through the worms' gurgling. Henry's Office!

DOCTOR: Of course. All right, stay here. And don't get all fired up by the drink and go off for a confrontation with Bianca.

IRIS: Would I?

DOCTOR: Yeah, would you.

MICKEY: Henry.

HENRY: Don't disturb me now, girl.

MICKEY: But, Bianca's locked herself in her room and, Henry, something's terribly wrong.

HENRY: Wrong? No, now nothing can go wrong.

MICKEY: The shadows, Henry. I've seen them sneaking in tonight. It's like they're, it's like they're getting inside the clientele.

HENRY: Are they? Is that what it's like, Mickey?

MICKEY: What are they?

HENRY: They are the disembodied proleptic souls of the creatures that those worms would one day have evolved into, had they not chosen to stay so sickeningly simple, and

MICKEY: Henry, what are you saying?

HENRY: And they are my kin.

MICKEY: No.

HENRY: They sought me out one dismal afternoon, when Bianca was letting me tinker with the transdimensional circuits from her Tardis, graciously allowing me to help her on the path to that insane ambition of hers. They needed me. They saw the potential in me that she never could.

MICKEY: No, you're crazy. Stress has done your head in.

HENRY: The shadows crave corporeal form, Mickey. The bodies they were cheated of, the lives they could have lived.

MICKEY: You're nuts! Allis and Ballis, they'll understand. They'll help me. (leaves)

HENRY: Oh, I'm quite sure they'll understand.

WORMS: Our enemies draw near, Bianca.

BIANCA: Iris should be dead by now. I, I'm getting old. With her lives made mine, I can sing our song for centuries more.

WORMS: Not her. The shadow creatures, the beings whose lives we have usurped, now seek revenge. We warned you about Henry.

BIANCA: That nothingly little scrumper. When our despotic song begins, these shadows will wither and die. All shall be our willing slaves.

WORMS: We dare not take risks. So, the Pro Faction is uniting with the Anti faction.

BIANCA: What? No! But I've tried to destroy both Iris and the Doctor. They know who I am. Who

IRIS: Yes, I know precisely who and what you are, and that the worms have kissed and made up. They told me, and they've taken me over. Too strong, can't fight. We're to sing together, united.

BIANCA: I can't work with you. You're an amateur.

WORMS: Unite and survive. Unite and survive. (repeats under dialogue)

IRIS: They're too strong.

BIANCA: No, worms, you can't force me to, to. Come, Iris.

IRIS: Yes. We must rehearse for the big number.

BIANCA: The show-stopper, to bring the house down.

MICKEY: Something was happening to Henry, Mister Ashcroft. It was like he was a new man, confident and powerful. He'd crept out from under Bianca's shadow and now the shadow was creeping out of him. I ran back to the bar, which was starting to fill up again. Distorted shadows seemed to slink around the sweating walls, picking out people and closing in. The atmosphere had changed. Heinrich could feel it too. He was playing something dreadfully maudlin. Then I saw Allis.

MICKEY: What's happened to you? Where's Ballis?

ALLIS: He's with Henry.

MICKEY: You don't look right. Your eyes are all

ALLIS: Henry has taken everything he needs now. All the information he needed from me, everything he needs from Ballis. We have nothing left to give.

MICKEY: I'm going to get you out of here.

ALLIS: No need, Mickey. There's nothing of me left. A shadow inside me, nothing else.

MICKEY: They came into the cabaret like ghosts, Mister Ashcroft. They drifted in, all our regulars, and this time there was none of their cheer, none of their old excitement. They came in and took their old places at their tables to watch the show.

HENRY: We have done well, Mickey. We've assembled them at the nexus point, ready for the shadows. You've been of invaluable help.

MICKEY: Keep away from me

(Henry laughs. Polite applause for Heinrich.)

BIANCA: Ladies and gentlemen, you honour me. Welcome to the last night at little Bianca's. And yet, this farewell performance heralds an opening night of something greater and brighter. It will be the show of all shows, legend to live forever. And I am joined on the stage tonight by Miss Iris Wildthyme!

IRIS: Oh, thank you, Bianca.

DOCTOR: (approaching) Iris, no! What did I tell you? Don't do it! (near) Iris, come down off that stage. You mustn't sing a note with that dreadful woman. If you sing in harmony you'll breach the multi-dimensional nexus point and let them all through!

STURMER: You, sit down. You're spoiling the entertainment.

DOCTOR: Oh, is that what you call entertainment, Corporal Sturmer, or whatever you've become? Chaos on an unimaginable cosmic scale?

STURMER: That is indeed what I call entertainment.

BIANCA: Our number, Heinrich.

HEINRICH: Yes, Bianca.

STURMER: Sit down, Doctor. Enjoy with us.

IRIS: Yes, I will, I must, perform!

DOCTOR: Oh, you fools, you don't know what you're doing!

IRIS + BIANCA: ♪ You say you never wanted her in your hair. Well, don't you know she's famous for it? Her name alone induces sighs of despair. Well, as you know she's famous for it. Aside from vats of liquor, your cupboard is bare. You damn her to the devil but she's already there. No one else besides her ♪

(The sound wobbles with the worms, making the words indistinct.)

IRIS + BIANCA: ♪ Hope is never far away ♪

MICKEY: Doctor! What's happening?

DOCTOR: Mickey, where's Allis and Ballis?

MICKEY: I don't know. Henry's sucked all the life out of them.

DOCTOR: Take me to his Office. Is that where he is?

MICKEY: I don't know where he's gone. Oh, that noise. What are they doing?

DOCTOR: Quickly!

MICKEY: I told the Doctor everything that Henry had said, Mister Ashcroft, and he wasn't happy as he rifled through Henry's Office.

MICKEY: If he finds us he'll kill us, messing about in here. This is where all our surveillance equipment is.

DOCTOR: There's a good deal more than that here, but where? Where, where?

MICKEY: Everyone's still drinking out there, even with all this going on.

DOCTOR: The House Special. Of course. It's a kind of elixir. The worms thrive in it, and whoever drinks it is made simpatico with the worms' psychic resonances.

MICKEY: Like a drunk's easier to persuade than someone sober.

DOCTOR: Something like that, yes.

MICKEY: Glad I never touch the stuff.

DOCTOR: It's how Iris's words turned everyone into belligerent maniacs when she sang before. The clientele have been wallowing in the stuff. Bianca's been creating a booster circuit ready for tonight. All these minds on the same psychic wavelength, providing enough sympathetic energy to project her song down the wormholes. And once it's underway through that interdimensional rabbit's warren

MICKEY: (under the Doctor) Rabbits? Where did the rabbits come from?

DOCTOR: The momentum will build. The biggest blanket broadcast the universe has known, coming to stop everything in its tracks.

MICKEY: So why are these shadows just letting it happen?

DOCTOR: Got it. The shadows are the ghosts of what the worms could have become, correct? So the

House Special is conducive to the shadows taking over the clientele too. But while the worms use it to tap into a subject's mental powers, the shadows are using it to attain a physical form, and they're poised here to strike. When Bianca begins her broadcast, the shadows will hijack the wormhole's power and spread themselves through the universe.

MICKEY: Oh, it's horrible.

DOCTOR: It's pitiful. Imagine, these formless creatures have been trapped in limbo for countless eons, denied a real life, a real destiny, and yet conscious of what it may have been. A shadow existence. Still, inheriting the destiny of every other creature in the universe smacks a little of over-compensation in my book. We've got to stop them.

MICKEY: Shadows? Worms?

DOCTOR: All of them. If it wasn't for the nexus point this evil and suffering would never.. oh where is it hidden!

MICKEY: What?

DOCTOR: The means by which

STURMER: Doctor!

DOCTOR: Sturmer. Henry's got all of you under his thumb, hasn't he?

STURMER: You can't stop the music, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Maybe not, but I can cause a note of discord.

(Struggle.)

MICKEY: Doctor, stop. He'll kill you.

(All the customers are singing along.)

HENRY: That's right, sing. Sing your hearts out for all I care. You're making it easier for me. Can't you hear them? My people, the shadows, ghosts of the future, will swallow up your ridiculous worms, and they will come here to adopt new bodies. It's too late to stop it now. You are helping it all to happen.

BIANCA: Nonsense. We're too strong for your shadows to take control.

IRIS: Wait, wait. What am I doing?

BIANCA: Sing, Iris!

IRIS: No, Bianca! Didn't you hear Henry? We're doing exactly what he wants.

BIANCA: He's nothing. Harmony, that's what we're bringing about.

IRIS: Listen, you silly woman. All I can hear are shadows, and we're letting them through!

SHADOWS: We are here. We are here.

MICKEY: Doctor!

DOCTOR: Ow! Oh, violence, that's always the answer, isn't it, Sturmer? Ow!

(Broken furniture, broken wall?)

DOCTOR: Oh! Ah ha. Henry's precious machine. Well done, Sturmer. You've helped me find it.

STURMER: What are you talking about? What is this thing?

DOCTOR: It's a very complicated kind of door-stop, and most of it is still working.

STURMER: It's a weapon.

DOCTOR: He's plumbed in the codium links rather well, but the protective barrier, tut, oh dear.

STURMER: The regional Gruppenführer will reward me well for the capture of weapon. Come away from there.

DOCTOR: Ah. Which gives me a good idea.

STURMER: I said, come away from there.

DOCTOR: Hmm? Oh, I intend to. But first.

(Thump, thud.)

DOCTOR: I do hate strong-arm tactics, but when needs must.

MICKEY: He's out cold.

DOCTOR: Shh. Listen.

MICKEY: They've stopped singing.

DOCTOR: And it sounds like all hell's broken loose.

MICKEY: Oh, it's getting darker.

DOCTOR: Shadows. They're coming for us.

SHADOW [OC]: Life will be better than ever, you'll see.

MICKEY: Oh! Oh, the door's jammed. It won't open.

DOCTOR: They must know I have a plan. They're scared. Here, let me try. Ah! Oh! Ah! Done it.

BELLIS: Whoa! What's happening here? Doctor, my mind.

MICKEY: Bellis? I thought you were dead.

DOCTOR: His mind's not fully possessed. There's hope for these people. I must go. Bellis, help Sturmer out of here. Get anyone who'll listen down to the cellar.

BELLIS: I, er, I'll try.

DOCTOR: Good man. Mickey, come with me.

MICKEY: Where to?
DOCTOR: Below decks.

MICKEY: Careful down here, Doctor. There was a leak from the ladies loos, and you might slip.
DOCTOR: Nonsense. The only thing down here is my Tardis.
MICKEY: Your what?
DOCTOR: Oh, and some shadows.
SHADOW: The mere mention of our name induces sighs of despair.
DOCTOR: Stay away, phantoms.
SHADOW: We gain form, substance, from our ears to our feet, face the music and dance.
MICKEY: Oh, Doctor. Doctor, they're trying to control me.
DOCTOR: Fight them. Where is it? Behind the stairwell. Yes!
MICKEY: Oh, a cupboard. That wasn't here before.
DOCTOR: And it shan't be again, if I can open the doors!
(Hissing.)
DOCTOR: They don't like the light from the control room. Get inside.
MICKEY: Oh!

BIANCA: Well, I hope you're happy, Iris. You stopped singing, broke the harmony.
IRIS: I'm still in my body, and you've not got me left-overs. Oh, I'm happy.
BIANCA: Harmony. The harmony I craved. The way to mate my mind with so many countless others.
IRIS: It's not minds this audience of ex-shadows are interested in mating with. My worms would probably approve.
BIANCA: Anti Faction filth.
IRIS: Oh, shut it. There are no factions now. They did it to themselves. The worms wanted to make everyone the same through us. Now they're the ones changing, evolving, just as they always feared, twisted, reshaped in the shadows.
BIANCA: Just as you, Iris, are changing and evolving into me.
IRIS: Never! Oh look, Ballis and Sturmer are going into the cellar.
BIANCA: At least they're being discrete.
BALLIS: Bianca, Iris, we've got to take cover. This place is going to blow.
BIANCA: No! No, I don't want to. The swan goes on until it drops.
IRIS: You want to die on stage? The show must go on? Ah, come on. Into the cellar, woman.

MICKEY: Oh, my Lord, it's enormous.
DOCTOR: Not now.
(Tardis doors close.)
DOCTOR: Now, the shadows are deranged, obsessed by the will to live but no idea what to do next. With the likes of Sturmer's men as their hosts, they could cause incalculable chaos throughout the universe. I've got to do it.
MICKEY: Do what?
DOCTOR: The machine Sturmer pushed me into controlled, among other things, the barriers around this building that protect it from the vagaries of the Vortex. When I first arrived, they were functional, and the two Time-Space vessels occupied the same place and Time with no ill effects. My craft inside hers. But now the barricades are broken, were I to land here again.
MICKEY: Er, kaboom?
DOCTOR: Kaboom's as apt a word as any to describe it, were it painted on a hoarding a million miles long and a billion miles high.
MICKEY: So why would you want to do that?
DOCTOR: There's no other way. In attempting to land around here, my ship will cauterise the dimensional portals running to and from Bianca's. The shadows will be caught here, unable to feed on the powers of the nexus.
MICKEY: All right, all right, look, I can't understand a word you're saying. Just go on and do it.
DOCTOR: A girl after my own hearts. Hold on to something.
MICKEY: Thank you.
DOCTOR: Not me. Really.
(The Tardis dematerialises.)

(Breaking glass.)
BALLIS: Yes, Sturmer, smash them. Smash them all!
BIANCA: What are you doing?
STURMER: Those filthy shadows. They stole away the music, they stole my men, but they will not steal the liquor.

IRIS: That's right, smash 'em. You smash those stupid ugly worms!
BIANCA: No! Spare the worms.
IRIS: Oh, they may have turned *your* mind against the universe, but they can leave me well out of it.
BALLIS: I have a spare crowbar.
IRIS: Oh ta, chuck. Oh, they've had this coming. Way-hey! Psychic link is severed!
STURMER: That noise, it hums with power, electricity of the gods.
(The Tardis is trying to materialise.)
BALLIS: Sounds like a Tardis.
IRIS: Oh Doctor, you devil. He's going for a Time Ram!
BELLIS: My head's spinning.
IRIS: You might lose it in another moment. Get your heads down, quick!

MICKEY: Doctor! Doctor, I can't. What's going on?
DOCTOR: Hold on! We're through the aftershocks.
MICKEY: Ah! Oh.
DOCTOR: The foreshocks. And we're just riding out the never-were shocks.
MICKEY: Never-were shocks?
DOCTOR: That's what I call them.

HENRY: No!
WORMS: What is happening?
HENRY: The Doctor. He's capping the wellspring of our power.
WORMS: Stop him. Stop him. Stop him!
HENRY: He's going to destroy us, send us back, forever without end.
(Crash, KaBOOM! Magnetic tape whirring on a spool.)

MICKEY: And that's the last of the tapes, Mister Ashcroft. It's a miracle anything survived the explosion. Not that it really was an explosion. The Doctor explained it. It was just a hypothetical explosion because with the nexus now sealed, the potential for any of it having happened at all was thrown into too much doubt. But on a smaller scale, on a human life or death scale, it happened all right. Even without the tapes, even as an old woman now, I can remember those last minutes clear as day. I can see the Doctor standing there before me.

DOCTOR: We're back, Mickey.
MICKEY: Oh.
DOCTOR: Back home.
MICKEY: Oh, Bianca's. Oh, it's a wreck.
DOCTOR: Its heart burnt out.
MICKEY: But Allis, and Ballis?
DOCTOR: Back to their own times and places, just like the rest of the clientele. Including, unfortunately, that oaf Sturmer and his Nazi goons.

MICKEY: We poked about the ruins and the rubble.

BIANCA: My dreams, crumbled and fallen around my ears.

MICKEY: Bianca sat alone at a broken table, and wept for the friends she had lost.

BIANCA: I am nothing but a husk.

MICKEY: She was nothing at all by the time we came back from the cellar with Iris. Gone.

IRIS: Good riddance to her, anomalous old fuddy-duddy.
DOCTOR: Have a care, Iris. She may be back. For you.
IRIS: Oh, I'll be ready for her. Hey, hey! I intend to be pootling about a good while yet.
DOCTOR: Well, happy pootling. Oh, no peace, no quiet study, time for us to go.

MICKEY: In a quiet corner, we found Henry, fading fast, like a shadow fades when the sun slides behind the clouds.

HENRY: Going, going. You will forget about me, of course. (fading) The architect of this place.
DOCTOR: Everyone will forget. Bianca's time was past. Now it's just a dark, fuggy little backwater on the bad side of town.
MICKEY: There's still magic here. There's always magic.

DOCTOR: Yes. There's always magic if you know where to look for it.

(A groan.)

DOCTOR: And there's Heinrich. Look, he'll play the piano again. You'll start anew, Mickey, somewhere else.

MICKEY: The Doctor was right, of course. He left, and Iris left, and no one came back to Bianca's. No one remembered. Not even Heinrich. Only me and I never liked to mention it. Heinrich and me, we did okay together for a while, but then he was called up and I had to go back to Scotland. Only those tapes remain to show any of it ever happened. And me, of course. But who'd believe me? I can see it in your eyes, Mister Ashcroft. It's a tall tale and you don't believe me. Well, listen to the tapes again. Yes, go on, you can take them with you, if you like. I trust you. But do take good care. If anything happens to them, there'll be nothing left at all. The way the Doctor talked, you'd think that was a good thing, but maybe he was just trying to protect his Iris. D'you know, I'm sure he loved her in a way, but he'd never admit it. You will look after them, won't you, Mister Ashcroft?

DOCTOR 7: Yes, Mickey. I'll look after them.